Engd by A. H. Ritchie

Yrs very truly

A. Potter

MEMORIAL

OF

REV. ABRAHAM POLHEMUS, D.D.,

Late Minister of the North Ref. Dutch Church of Newark.

CONTAINING

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

AND

A SELECTION OF DISCOURSES

DELIVERED TO HIS LATE CHARGE.

NEWARK, N. J.:
PUBLISHED BY THE CONSISTORY OF SAID CHURCH.

1858.

BX9593
.P6A3

62329

JOHN A. GRAY,
PRINTER AND STEREOTYPER,
16 & 18 Jacob Street, N. Y.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

MEMOIR, ... 5

Resolutions at Newark and Hopewell, ... 21

Tribute to Dr. Polhemus, ... 24

FUNERAL DISCOURSE. By DR. FORSYTH, ... 27

SERMONS BY DR. POLHEMUS.

I. THE PREACHER'S THEME, ... 45

"I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—1 COR. 2 : 2.

II. THE PENITENT THIEF, ... 61

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—LUKE 23 : 42, 43.

III. DARK DISPENSATIONS KNOWN HEREAFTER, ... 73

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."—JOHN 13 : 7.

IV. THE LAW MAGNIFIED, ... 84

"He will magnify the law, and make it honorable."—ISA. 42 : 21.

V. THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN, ... 95

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—ACTS 7 : 59, 60.

VI. THE LIFE TO COME, ... 106

"The life which is to come."—1 TIM. 4 : 8.

VII. THE VICTORY OF FAITH, ... 119

"Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 JOHN 5 : 4.

PAGE

VIII. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus, ... 131

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."—Acts 9 : 3–6.

IX. Christ in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, . . . 141

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."—Rev. 1 : 12, 13.

X. Christ precious to Believers, ... 153

"Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious."—1 Pet. 2 : 7.

XI. A door opened in Heaven, ... 163

"I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven."—Rev. 4 : 1.

XII. The Resurrection of the Body, ... 173

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—Phil. 3 : 21.

Installation Sermon. By Rev. Dr. Riddle, ... 189

Resolutions of the Consistory of the North Reformed Dutch Church of the City of Newark:

Resolved, That as a mark of our high regard for our late pastor, Rev. Abraham Polhemus, D.D., and with a view to the spiritual advancement of the people of his charge, and of all who may peruse the work, a memorial, consisting of a brief biographical sketch, and a selection from the edifying and scriptural sermons which he delivered to us during his brief ministry, be published under the direction of Consistory.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Consistory be given to Rev. John Forsyth, D.D., for his aid in the preparation of such memorial, and for the valuable discourse, delivered by him on the death of our pastor; and that the same be also published.

Resolved, That the Rev. Dr. Riddle be also requested to furnish, for publication, a copy of the sermon delivered by him at the installation of Dr. Polhemus.

MEMOIR.

The Rev. Abraham Polhemus, D.D., was born at Hallett's Cove, (now Astoria,) Long Island, in 1812. He was emphatically a son of the Reformed Dutch Church, for both his paternal and maternal ancestors during nearly two centuries had lived and died in her fellowship. He was a lineal descendant of the Rev. Johannes Theodorus Polhemus, who had been sent by the Church of Holland, as a missionary to Itamarca, in Brazil. Leaving this field—for what reason we know not—he came to New-Netherland in 1654, and was soon after installed minister of Midwout,* (now Flatbush,) or rather of the whole region now known as the County of Kings. The parents of Dr. Polhemus, during his early years, were members of the church of Newtown, which, in connection with that of Jamaica, was then under the pastoral care of the late venerable and Rev. Dr. Schoonmaker. When at a proper age he was sent to a classical school taught by the Rev. Mr. Whiting, under whose care he remained until his admission to the Sophomore class of Rutgers College, in 1828.

During his residence at College, Dr. Polhemus was noted for his joyous temperament, and his exceedingly companionable qualities, and as may be inferred, he was a decided favorite

* The church at Midwout—the first Reformed Dutch Church on Long Island—was erected in the form of a cross. It was about 60 feet long, and 28 wide. Dominie Polhemus preached in it every Sunday morning, and in the afternoon at Breuckelen and Amersfort (Flatlands) alternately, until the installation of Henry Selyns at Breuckelen. He labored here until 1676.—*Brodhead Hist.*, 580, 615.

with his fellow-students. He always maintained a most respectable position in his class. His genial disposition laid him open to temptation; but though a mere youth, and one who made at that time no profession of religion, he was mercifully kept by God's restraining grace from the follies and vices which are more or less incident to academic life. He was graduated in 1831. During the ensuing year his mind was arrested by the subject of his religious condition and prospects, and having obtained a good hope through grace, he resolved to consecrate himself to the ministry of reconciliation. He united with the Collegiate Dutch Church of New-York, in 1831 or 1832, and soon afterwards returned to New-Brunswick, to join the Theological Seminary, in which he took the full course of study under Drs. Milledoler, Cannon, and McCelland.

He received licensure from the Classis of New-York in July, 1835, and soon after he accepted the call of the congregation of Hopewell to become their pastor. Over this pleasant rural charge he was ordained and installed on the 28th October, 1835. In the same year he was married to Miss Eliza B. Heyer, daughter of the late Isaac Heyer, long an active and must useful member of the Collegiate Church of New-York.

The life of the Christian pastor, whether in town or country, who is exclusively occupied with the duties of his ministry, is not usually diversified by very striking incidents; it is apt to flow on in an even current. Such was particularly the case with the ministry of Dr. Polhemus at Hopewell. There were periods when the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, yet there was at no time a revival of so remarkable a character as to call for a special history of it. Month by month, and year after year, he went out and in among the people of his charge, preaching to them publicly and from house to house, growing in their affections, and having good reason to believe that his labors were not in vain. Though called to mourn the loss of relatives near and dear to him — his father, and an

only sister—his own immediate family was never invaded by death during his residence there.

In 1846, he visited Europe, partially with a view to attend the Evangelical Alliance, which met in London in August of that year. The tour embraced the most interesting portions of England, Scotland, France, and Holland. It is needless to say that he enjoyed it exceedingly, and often delighted his friends by his graphic accounts of the incidents of travel, humorous or otherwise, and by his lively recollections of the men whom he met during the sessions of the Alliance.

After his return home, he received several invitations, formal and informal, to remove to other fields of labor—to Utica, to Newburgh, and to Belleville—all of which he deemed it his duty to decline. Considerations, certainly, were not wanting to induce him to accept one or other of these calls, such as facilities for the education of his children, and the more abundant means of intellectual culture afforded by a town, as compared with those to which the rural pastor has access. But when the moment for decision came, his own love for Hopewell, and the manifold evidences of his people's warm affection for himself, carried the day.

The region covered by the parish is in what may well be styled the garden of Dutchess county, one of the oldest and best cultivated portions of the State of New-York, and abounds in scenery at once beautiful and grand. The view from the parsonage belongs to the class of which it may be said, "the eye is not satisfied with seeing," as new points of attraction are perpetually presenting themselves. Nor is the region less attractive in its social and moral aspects. It is in the main occupied by a homogeneous population, whose fathers for several generations have lived and died in the faith and fellowship of the Reformed Dutch Church. And as there is only a limited admixture of race in the population, so is there comparatively little diversity of religious profession. The church of Hopewell may properly be styled the parish church of the precinct

of that name, for the great mass of the people resident within its bounds belong to it as members or adherents. The minister in such a locality, who efficiently discharges the functions of the pastor and the preacher, holds a position, in some respects at least, much more patriarchal and potential in influence, than is that of a pastor in town or city. Such was the position of Dr. Polhemus in Hopewell, after he had lived there long enough to become known to the community, and the labors of years had won for him the love and confidence of those among whom he went preaching the Gospel of Christ.

Nor should we omit to mention here, his pleasant relations with his brethren of the Classis of Poughkeepsie. With his immediate neighbors, the ministers of Fishkill and Hackensack, his acquaintance began about the time of his licensure, and their mutual affection was of the strongest kind. As their parishes were contiguous, they were near enough to each to become in a special sense co-laborers in the work of the Lord, to sympathize with each other's sorrows, and to be helpers of each other's joy. Other members resided at too great a distance to admit of very frequent intercourse with them, yet when it did occur, it was eminently cordial and confidential. "Often," says the Rev. Dr. Kip, in a letter to a mutual friend—"often has our dear brother remarked to me, that he anticipated the meetings of Classis with great delight, as the seasons of reünion with beloved friends." It may with safety be said, that no member of the body held a higher place in the esteem of his associates, or exerted a more commanding influence in the discussions of the Classis, than Dr. Polhemus.

By his congregation, Dr. Polhemus was esteemed very highly, in love for his work's sake, and also for his own sake. Ordinarily, the church was, on the Sabbath, filled with an attentive audience. The pastor's wishes and counsels in regard to things spiritual, or to "the outward business" of the house of God, were sought and respected. His comfort was studied;

and what is far better, he had from time to time the joy of knowing that his labors in the Lord were not in vain.* He would have been a strangely constituted man, if he had not felt himself strongly bound to such a field, and such a people.

But it was clearly the Master's will that the ties which bound Dr. Polhemus to Hopewell should be broken. In December, 1856, the scheme of erecting the North Dutch Church of Newark, which had been for some time under consideration, was formally set on foot, and prosecuted with much energy, and with a success that fully vindicates the wisdom of the enterprise. From the outset the attention of the persons engaged in it, had been turned toward Dr. Polhemus, whom they regarded as being specially qualified, both as a man and as a minister, to become a co-worker with them in the arduous undertaking of building up a new congregation in the city of Newark. Accordingly, as soon as the church was organized, and the requisite forms and notices could be observed, a unanimous call was presented to him in January, 1857. There were considerations which strongly drew him to Newark; and yet for reasons already suggested, he hesitated as to the path of duty. But after a prayerful consideration of the whole matter, he believed that Providence pointed him to Newark, and he was accordingly released from his charge by the Classis of Poughkeepsie on the 23d March, 1857.

Dr. Polhemus was installed pastor of the North Church of Newark on the evening of the 3d of May, 1857.† With what views and feelings he entered this new field of labor—in many respects so different from that which he had left—may be seen in the sermon he delivered on the succeeding Sabbath. He was not free from anxieties of various kinds, but he had a

* The number added to the church of Hopewell during his ministry, was 225. Of these, 200 were on confession of their faith.

* The service took place in the First Dutch Church. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Riddle of Jersey City, and it was a most impressive and scriptural discourse. It is inserted in this volume, at the request of the Consistory of the North Dutch Church.

cheerful hope that the results would be good. Depending upon promised grace, he concentrated all his energies upon the work to which his Master had called him; and brief as was his career, it was long enough to bring out the sterling qualities of the man, and to prove his peculiar fitness for the post to which he had been invited. His congregation was in its infancy, in point of numbers only a little band, with the costly work before them of erecting a suitable house of worship; but Dr. Polhemus had not been among them a week, before he had reason to feel as Paul did among the Roman brethren, who came to meet him at Appii Forum, "whom when he saw, *he thanked God and took courage.*" His people rallied round him, and inspired the pastor with confidence. And from that moment until the sad evening, when they bore his lifeless remains to the sepulchre, they felt for him and his an untiring and devoted affection. That affection is unabated.

He labored with diligence and most encouraging success, until the 12th of August, when he left Newark to get a few weeks' relaxation, and to visit his friends at Newburgh and Hopewell. Before he reached Newburgh, which he did on the evening of the 12th, he complained of feeling ill, the result, probably, of getting over-heated when on his way to the steamboat in New-York; but for several days, though confined to the house, the case was not deemed serious enough to require medical aid. On the following Monday, however, a physician was called in, who found him suffering under an aggravated form of dysentery, which increased in virulence to such a degree by the end of the week, that it was thought advisable to seek the counsel of his old Christian friend and family physician, Dr. Wortman, of Hopewell. From that time he never left the house, nor even his room, until he was borne from it to his long home. The crisis of the disease was thought to have been reached early in September, and for a time the prospect of his recovery was encouraging; but a relapse occurred, and with occasional intervals of seeming improvement, which kept up

the hopes of his friends, he continued to decline, until he calmly fell asleep in Jesus, about 11 A.M., on the 28th of October.

From an early period of his illness, which so quickly put on a serious aspect, Dr. Polhemus was impressed with the feeling, that his work on earth was done, and that his sickness would be unto death. This was the view of his case which he habitually took, though at times, as the symptoms improved, he would speak of getting better, and, no doubt, had occasional hopes of recovery. On one occasion he expressed himself that the sickness was a discipline. Viewing it as such, he accepted it in a meek and filial temper, with the earnest prayer, and the confident assurance that, if raised up, he might be a more zealous and devoted pastor. At another time, referring to the dealings of his heavenly Father, he said: "God has made me to know more of myself, then I ever knew before. I have had many precious views of my Saviour on this bed, and I thank Him for it. I can commit all into His hands, and know no will but His. Oh! that I had been a more faithful minister of Christ! But it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by the precious blood of Jesus, that we are saved." At another time he said: "Blessed God! if thou hast more work for me to do, raise me up and let me glorify thee. If my work is done, let me, like Stephen, see Thee standing on the right hand of God. There I shall join dear friends that have gone before, and be joined by dear ones I now leave behind, loving and praising the precious Saviour. Blessed union! the Church on earth and the Church in heaven are one." The sermon on the Death of Stephen was one of the latest preached by him, before he was taken ill, and it was very evident that the subject was one which had deeply impressed his own heart. At an early period of the disease, when a fatal termination was first apprehended, he prayed: "If my work is done, let me, like Stephen, see Thee standing on the right hand of God." We have good reason to believe that his prayer was answered.

The interest manifested for him by the religious community of

Newark generally, and the many tokens he received of the warm sympathy and love of his own people, very sensibly affected him. Repeatedly he said to his brother-in-law, Dr. Forsyth: "I wish I could tell them how much I love them." Once, when speaking of his own people, he said: "Those are good, noble men. That church will be blessed, whoever may be called to preach to them. If I never preach in that new church, yet *there* is another church built for God's worship, and some of God's servants will preach in it. Souls will be converted, and I shall rejoice over them in heaven."

During his long sickness that gracious promise was fulfilled to him: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee." "I am," said he, "waiting and willing to do the will of my heavenly Father. Not a thing on earth troubles me. I have committed all into his hands, and only wait his will." He had many ties to bind him to earth, and for the sake of his newly formed church, of his dear partner, and their beloved children, several of whom were of too tender an age to appreciate the loss of a father, he doubtless desired to live, yet for himself he found that it was better to depart, and to be with Christ. Only once, some two days before his decease, was the sunshine of his soul obscured, and then only for a moment.

After a very bad night, in the course of which he at one time thought he was dying, but afterwards had a refreshing sleep of some hours, he said: "I feel as if I were better." Waiting a moment he added: "Is it not strange that one so low as I was last night, should, after that, hope to get well again? I do not know that I ought to say *hope*, for it is better to depart and be with Christ." After a short pause he added: "Oh! that I had been more faithful as a minister of Christ." One of those present said: "You must only look to the righteousness of the Saviour as the ground of hope." "Yes," said he, "but God says, Give an account of thy stewardship." Then, waiting a

moment, he exclaimed in a tone of joy: "Behold, O God! my shield, look upon me in the face of thine Anointed."

At another time, addressing one dear to him, he said: "I am going to the mansion of my Father, and there is a house prepared there for you, and you will come too." On being asked, "How can we spare you? How can we do without you?" he replied, with a pleasant smile: "Oh! God will far more than fill up my place. I have a hope. It is like an anchor to my soul. Is not this better than all else? Is not this better than all the world? *Is it not?* Yes, the world can never take it away."

When in pain, he said: "Father, O holy Father! let this cup pass from me if it be possible; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. Lord Jesus, take me to Thyself. Receive my spirit: do not keep me here. Hinder me not; I long to go."

On being told he appeared easier, he said: "Well, but I had longed to go over and see that good land, that goodly mountain and Lebanon. To depart and be with Christ is far better. I would be absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

There was hardly a time during his protracted illness when he was free from pain. When upon the bed he was obliged to lie constantly upon his back. Frequently his sufferings were intense. During one of these paroxysms, he said: "Oh! the fellowship of His sufferings. Now I know what this means. Now I taste the bitterness of His soul. Who is it that says: '*The fellowship of his sufferings?*' Paul the apostle. Oh! I would love to give to my people the experience I have gained on this bed. I could preach it to them." He then repeated the words: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

About 3 A.M. of the day on which he died, and when it had become evident that the hand of death was upon him, he exclaimed: "I see Jesus. Now that I have seen him, I never

can come back again. I see Jesus. Did I not tell you that I should see Jesus? My soul is ravished with the sight." Not long after he added: "I have a perfect assurance, not a doubt nor a fear."

During the whole period of Dr. Polhemus' sickness, prayer was made for him without ceasing, at the family altar, at assemblies of his own flock convened for this express purpose, and by the fathers and brethren in the General Synod, which held a special meeting at Newark, in October. But they availed not in arresting his disease. Though in the full vigor of a noble manhood, though he had just entered upon a new and important sphere of labor, one for which he seemed to be particularly fitted, his work was done, and his sun went down while it was yet noon. It is one of those providences, which to our short-sightedness appear to be exceeding strange. And yet our Divine Master may have made, and, we trust, did make, the death of this devoted servant of Christ the means of accomplishing more good than would have been effected, had he been spared for years. His removal, we believe, has told upon thousands in the city to which he had so lately come, and whom he never might have reached with the living voice; and in regard to the whole community of Newark, it may in this sense be true, that "he being dead yet speaketh."

The funeral services at Newburgh, on the afternoon of the 29th October were conducted by the Rev. Drs. McLaren and McCarroll of that place, and the Rev. Mr. Suydam of Fishkill Landing, and were attended by many of Dr. Polhemus' old parishioners of Hopewell. The body was then conveyed to Newark, and on the afternoon of the 30th, the more formal funeral services were held in the First Reformed Dutch Church, which was crowded in every part by a multitude of mourners, including a large number of his clerical brethren. There, where a few months before, he had stood, the image of health and vigor, to assume the responsibilities and make the promises of a pastor, on that very spot his coffined remains

were placed. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. De Witt of New-York, from John 17 : 4. The devotional services were conducted by Drs. Scott, Stearns, and Kip of Fishkill. The body was then conveyed to the cemetery on the banks of the Passaic. There the precious remains of our dear pastor sleep in Jesus in the sure hope of a glorious resurrection.

Dr. Polhemus was a man, whose unpretending dignity and genial manners could not fail to make a favorable impression upon all who were brought into contact with him. The casual acquaintance would have discovered no reason to modify his first estimate of his character, however intimate with him he might subsequently have become. The traits that struck a stranger upon a first interview, and which would not fail to win his regard, were not put on for the occasion, but were really characteristic of the man. Hence the strong personal attachment which he won for himself, not only from his own people, but the whole community in the midst of which he lived. "It would be impossible," says the Rev. Mr. Cobb, his successor at Hopewell, "almost to over-estimate the extent of the attachment felt for him, not only by his own immediate charge, but throughout the whole community; and his death seemed like a household affliction to all that enjoyed his friendship while here. Each one has some precious reminiscence of 'the Dominie,' and the evidences of his kindness, his cordiality, his attention to the poor, his devotion to the sick, are everywhere apparent. His urbanity of manners exerted a most remarkable power, winning the esteem and affection of every class of persons, and I frequently hear those in humble life, speak with pride of his affability to them and his interest in their affairs." So it was in Newark. Though a resident here only for a few months, and the pastor of an infant church, he had many ardent friends, and few have so strongly impressed this community in so brief a period.

Dr. Polhemus, though neither bashful nor timid, was a man

of unaffected modesty. He esteemed others better than himself; yet, when called to the performance of a public duty, he did not hesitate to go forward, and the manner in which he discharged the duty was in the highest degree creditable. We might refer, in illustration of this remark, to his Address before the Alumni of Rutgers College, which was one of the most acceptable and useful ever delivered before that body; and to his speech before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1856, as the representative of the Reformed Dutch Church. Indeed his sound judgment, his energetic zeal, combined as they were with perfect frankness, and cordial manners, eminently fitted him to take a large share in the public business of the Church.

He was a true son of the Dutch Church. Born and bred in her communion, he loved her principles, her polity, her distinctive usages, and ever felt the warmest interest in all that concerned her welfare. He was ever ready for any effort to build up her institutions and to enlarge her limits. After his election as a Trustee of Rutgers College, he was rarely absent from the meetings of the Board, and with equal cheerfulness and efficiency, performed every service that was laid upon him. At the same time he loved the whole household of faith, and was at the furthest remove from the narrow-minded sectarian.

As a preacher and pastor, he sought to commend himself to every man's conscience, making known to his hearers the whole counsel of God, keeping nothing back that would be profitable unto them. He loved to hear and he loved to preach that good old Gospel whose sum and substance is Christ Jesus the Lord, made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His sermons were marked by solid sense and sound divinity; they were clear and concise in style, scriptural in substance, scriptural in form, showing him to be a well-furnished workman. He had the

clearest view of the doctrines of grace and of the scriptural grounds on which they rest.

He needs no eulogy. The fact that he closed a ministry of twenty-one years with every heart warmly attached to him, and that in his brief ministry of but a few months, he won the warm regard of his own people, and the respect and admiration of the large community to which he came a stranger, is a commentary on his worth more forcible than words.

The connection of Dr. P. with the North Dutch Church at Newark, was of a peculiar and marked character. In common with the friends of the denomination generally, he was early impressed with the importance of establishing another Dutch church in this rapidly growing city, and when the enterprise had not yet assumed form or shape, he consented to preach several times for those who had established a stated service, which they trusted might prove to be the embryo of a church. The ardent desire, the fond hope at once took possession of all interested, that he would yet become their pastor; and this unauthorized anticipation seemed to give new energy to the project. A site for a church edifice on the main thoroughfare, fronting one of the beautiful parks of the city, in value not less than fourteen thousand dollars, was by the liberality of the friends of the cause in Newark, speedily given to the enterprise, free from debt. It then appeared to be a possible thing to effect the desired purpose. A church was organized. No other than Dr. Polhemus was, or had been thought of as their pastor. A unanimous call was presented to him. This infant church knew the sacrifice they were asking him to make, and how dear to each of their hearts his memory is, and ever will be, that he made that sacrifice for his Master and for them.

The congregation, when the call was accepted, had contemplated nothing more for two years to come, than the erection of a suitable lecture-room; but such was the energy given to the work by his accepting their call, that they immediately de-

termined on the erection of a church edifice, at an expense of forty thousand dollars—and twenty thousand dollars of that sum was forthwith subscribed.

Dr. P. and his family were received at their new home with the warmest affection and with every mark of attention. His ministry among this people—so short, and yet so long to be remembered—so afflicting in its termination, and yet so momentous in its results, continued but little more than three months. During that period the spacious hall in which the congregation worshipped was always well filled, and that too, with most attentive hearers; his clear scriptural style, compressing much well-ordered truth in the fewest words, his sincerity, manifested by an energy of expression and manner, often thrilling, together with a certain unpretending majesty of presence, fastened the attention of his auditory. The members of his own congregation during the perplexities and cares of the business of the week, looked forward with pleasing anticipations to the services of the Sabbath to be fed and refreshed by spiritual food; and the members of other denominations feeling a security offered in his catholic spirit, often waited upon his ministrations, and heard the truth as it is in Jesus. The clergy of the city greeted him as a brother, and cherish his memory with a high regard.

During his brief pastorate in Newark, he found his way to the garret and to the cellar—to the home of the mechanic and the residence of the rich. In conversation with the young and the old, he pressed the momentous importance of an interest in Christ; and since his departure, truly affecting has it been to the officers of his bereaved church to hear those who come to profess their faith in a crucified Redeemer, trace their first impressions to the words of him who is now in heaven.

Perhaps his people, in the freshness of their love, doted on him too much; and yet they plead the cordiality of his nature, the peculiar beauty of his piety, his freedom from self-aggrandizement and self-promotion, his frankness, his manly tender-

ness, his devotion to their best and highest interests as some mitigation of their error.

Never perhaps did a new church proceed with more apparent prosperity than the North Dutch Church of Newark. Every thing was as they would have desired, until suddenly in the month of August the tidings came that the life of their pastor was in peril. Then they felt what before they had not contemplated, that the pastor they loved so much—whom perhaps they were proud to call theirs, might be taken from them. They felt their weakness. They cried to God for help.

The closet, the family altar, the meetings of special prayer, can bear witness to the fervency of their supplications. For the two months of Dr. P.'s illness, the infant church, amid light and shadow, hope and fear, passed a severe and salutary discipline. Those prayers were not answered in the manner they desired.

But when we remember his triumphant departure, his priceless testimony to our faith, the solemnity his death produced on the brethren of his Church in the city of New-York and on the clergy of Newark, just when God was about to shed abroad the influences of the Spirit; when we remember the greater devotion induced in his own church, who will say those prayers were not answered? What we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

The remains of Dr. Polhemus were brought to Newark, where a most impressive discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt. It was a day of sorrow to the city, and one which will be long remembered. In the latter part of April, his remains were removed from the vault, where they had been temporarily placed, to a lot selected by his church on the banks of the Passaic. It was a beautiful spring morning, the air was balmy, the birds vocal, and the peaceful river never was more placid. There was the open grave and the coffin, beside it stood the brother, the two little sons and the

faithful servant-man of the departed. His Consistory stood around the place of burial, submissive to God's will, but stirred with unspoken sorrow. The Rev. Dr. Scott raised his voice to heaven in the fervent prayer of faith: all seemed to commune with God. Then he, for whom we mourned, was carefully placed in that new tomb, there to rest until the morning of the resurrection. Four weeks from that day, the consistory of our sister church gathered at eventide around the death-couch of him, who on the beautiful morning led our sorrowing thoughts to the throne of all grace. How mysterious! how impressive are God's ways! The congregation who were so full of sympathy for our infant church in its grief, are alike desolate. The community in which both walked, radiating the warmth of Christian love, have a new sorrow. The children of him who spoke words of tenderness to the orphan boys at their father's grave, are now also orphans. When Abraham Polhemus and James Scott died, humanity suffered loss. When they fell, a chasm was made amid the cedars of Lebanon, not soon to close.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: And their works do follow them."

RESOLUTIONS OF DR. POLHEMUS' CONSISTORY AT NEWARK.

At a meeting of the Consistory of *The North Reformed Dutch Church* of the city of Newark, held November 13th, 1857, it was

Resolved, That in the death of the Rev. A. Polhemus, D.D., we recognize and bow beneath the chastening hand of our Heavenly Father. Called by the unanimous voice of our infant Church to be our first pastor, his virtues, his talents, his piety, and his labors have made him very dear to our hearts. Furnished for his work, devoted to the cause of his Master, he was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Frank, intelligent, and disinterested, his intercourse would win the heart. In his tongue was the law of kindness. Stricken, and bereaved as we are by this afflicting dispensation, we thank our Father that we have been permitted to have such a pastor. His memory is a rich legacy: his short ministry will not be forgotten. While we sorrow that we shall here see his face no more, we rejoice in the precious consolations which were vouchsafed to him when the hour of his departure was at hand. We will strive to profit by the words that he spake unto us, and follow him as he followed Christ.

In our deep bereavement, we ask the prayers of the Church of Christ, that we may know and do our Father's will, and that his blessing may abide upon the enterprise so dear to our pastor's heart.

Resolved, That we feel and appreciate the Christian kindness of the church at Hopewell in extending to us their sympathy in this the time of our common sorrow. Our pastor while with us, sought for them our prayers; and now while we mingle our tears, it is a grateful reflection that our supplications for each other's welfare may ascend together to Heaven.

Resolved, That we extend to the bereaved family our warmest sympathy. Their happiness and welfare will continue to be a matter of our deepest solicitude and care; and we thank God for

those precious promises which belong to the widow and the fatherless.

Resolved, That if, in God's Providence, we are permitted to complete the edifice, so far advanced under the pastoral care of him we mourn, we will insert within its walls a tablet to his memory, evidencing to coming generations the memorial of him within our hearts; but he has a better tablet; his record is on high.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the family of our pastor, and to the consistory of the church of Hopewell, and be duly published in the *Christian Intelligencer*.

T. A. Waldron, President *pro tem.*
J. C. Woodruff, Secretary.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONSISTORY OF HOPEWELL.

Inasmuch as it hath pleased God in his mysterious providence, to remove by death the late beloved pastor of this church, Rev. A. Polhamus, D.D., we deem it fitting in the few following resolutions, to give some suitable expression to our feelings in view of this sad event.

Resolved, That although he had removed from among us to another field of labor, yet his long continued ministry in this church, and his noble, manly, and Christian character, had so deeply endeared him to us, that we mourn his loss as that of a well-tried and valued friend, cherish his memory as that of a truly faithful pastor; and as the best proof of our affection, will seek to remember the words he spake while yet with us, and to profit by his precepts and example.

Resolved, That while we are deeply grieved by this dispensation, we recognize therein the hand of our Father, and humbly bow to the will of Him who doeth all things well; and would

also offer our grateful acknowledgment of that grace which sustained our departed friend through his painful illness, and rendered the closing hours of his life not only peaceful but triumphant.

Resolved, That while we know theirs to be a grief with which a stranger may not intermeddle, and God only can assuage, we tender to his bereaved family our deepest sympathies, commending them to the widow's Friend, and the Father of the fatherless; and bringing them by the prayer of faith to that loving Jesus, who so clearly manifested himself to him for whom they mourn, even in the bitterness of death.

Resolved, That we tenderly sympathize with the infant church so suddenly and severely afflicted by the loss of a pastor whose labors among them God had already blessed, commending them with all their interests to the kind Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Resolved, That these resolutions be preserved in the records of the Church, and also published in the *Christian Intelligencer;* and that copies be transmitted to the family of our former pastor, and to the Consistory of the North Reformed Dutch Church of Newark.

A TRIBUTE

TO THE LATE REV. ABRAHAM POLHEMUS, D.D.

Earth was matured to beauty. Autumn's sun
Lay dreamily o'er forest, field, and bower,
As if, his growing, ripening work all done,
He rested on his laurels for the hour.
The hills grow misty in the mellowing light,
And to the ear, the farewell song of bird
Comes softly, as he wings his southern flight;
Fainter, the hum of insect life is heard;
Each tree, each leaf, a rainbow glory wears,
Mature in loveliness—oh! do not say,
Untimely frost this hectic beauty bears,
Blinding his victim to a quick decay.
The leaf is ripe—it gave refreshing shade
To faint and weary from the summer sun;
A thing all grateful to the eye 'twas made,
But now it fades and falls—its work is done.

And one we loved, oh! who can say how well?
Through all those lovely, golden autumn hours,
Lay ripening for the land where angels dwell,
Fading, fast fading, with the autumn flowers.
The glowing strength of his meridian years,
The manly vigor of his glorious prime,
The brow whereon no furrow yet appears,
The locks which show no silver trace of time,
The wealth of clustering love that girts his way,
"The living jewels of his Christian home,"
The fervent hopes wherewith God's people pray—
All seem to say, His hour is not yet come.
But sickness brought him days of weariness:
Like autumn leaf he ripened, brighter grew,
And lovelier in every Christian grace,
So none could doubt the fount from whence he drew.
And thus he brightened, thus he faded, till
The winds and rains of later autumn swept
The withered, falling leaves away at will;
And then the weary, wasted body slept—

"For so He giveth his beloved sleep,"
And holy radiance, the brow to grace,
With a meek trustfulness, so sweet, so deep!
It wore an angel look, that sleeper's face.

Oh! what a death! The pearly gates unfold,
Ere the departing spirit leaves the clay;
Jesus, at God's right hand, his eyes behold;
His soul, all ravished, would no longer stay!
Call not such triumph an *untimely death;*
His work was done, his soul was ripe for heaven,
And God was honored with his latest breath,
The God to whom his life, his all, were given.
And his had been a noble life, so fraught
With kindness, so replete with acts of love,
They seemed the burden of his daily thought:
Thus walked he in the light sent from above;
So firm in purpose, fearless in the right,
He shunned not all God's counsel to declare;
The darkened soul he guided to the light,
The weakest ever won his watchful care—
A life without reproach, and crowned by love.
A mother weeps the son who's "gone before,"
The smitten household daily sorrow prove,
A brother mourns for him he sees no more.
But why sum up? Th' ambassador of Christ,
Loved for his Master's sake, and for his own,
Leaves fragrant memories, of many years,
That with his useful, honored life have grown.
Few men so large a share of love have won;
Few, when they die, create so wide a grief;
Few leave so great a blank, as he has done,
Who faded with the fading of the leaf.

Turn we to yonder clime of cloudless light,
Where the redeemed their crowns of glory wear,
Their palms of victory, their robes of white,
And *know* he lives with Christ forever there;
Know that he shines a jewel in His crown,
Know that the songs of triumph louder swell;
Then, let us lay each selfish murmur down,
Then, let the grieved heart answer, IT IS WELL.

THETA.

HOPEWELL, *Dec. 15th*, 1857.

FUNERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF

REV. DR. POLHEMUS,

DELIVERED BEFORE HIS CHURCH,

AT THEIR REQUEST,

BY

REV. JOHN FORSYTH, D.D.

November. 1857.

FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.—DEUT. 34 : 5.

SUCH is the brief notice of the death of one whose name is among the most illustrious in the annals of our race. The life of Moses forms one of the great epochs in the *world's* history. As the servant of the Lord, he redeemed the Hebrew people from bondage; he was thus lawgiver, leader, and king; and he was the chosen instrument of God to give a new, visible organization to the Church. No mere man ever enjoyed, here on earth, divine fellowship in degree and manner, such as did Moses; no mere man was ever favored with such displays of the divine glory, as were made to him; and no other servant of the Lord could say what Moses did: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up *like unto me.*" The offices he filled were alike various and exalted. He was the inspired historian, poet, lawgiver, king in Jeshurun, founder of a religious economy, sole ruler in the house of God, interpreter of the divine will to his own brethren, and to all coming ages. His gifts and graces were not less remarkable and rare. He was not without sin; he had his frailties, for which he suffered; yet his character is a brilliant constellation of virtues—strong faith, exemplary meekness, unswerving faithfulness, undaunted courage, unsurpassed generosity, and entire devotion to the cause of God. After enduring the toils and trials incident to his high position for half a century, after he had seen one whole

generation laid in the dust, and the children filling the places of their fathers—venerable alike for his years, his virtues, and his services—he retires, at the command of the Lord, from his elevated post. He quits it, however, not because he was unequal to the duties, or was weary of his work; his eye was not dim, his natural force was unabated; he goes because such was the will of Him whose servant he was, and because his work was done. At the command of the Lord, he goes away to the top of Pisgah, all alone, unattended unless by ministering spirits, to get one view of the goodly land of promise, and then to die, leaving behind him a glorious example and a deathless name.

"So," that is, in the place, at the time, under the circumstances narrated in this chapter; "So Moses died according to the word of the Lord." I have selected this short yet striking account of Moses' death, because it suggests lessons which we should be daily learning, and of which we are so impressively reminded by the removal of your beloved brother, friend, and pastor. We learn

I. That the servants of Christ cease from their earthly labors and leave this world at the time and under the circumstances fixed by their Lord and Master.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The dark sceptre of this dread monarch extends over every land and every generation. Neither elevated station, nor imperial power, nor princely wealth, nor laborious benevolence can exempt any from the stroke of death. Neither the precautions of prudence, nor the skill of science, nor the tears of affection, nor the prayers of piety, can prevent the blow, or even defer the fatal hour. "Who is he that liveth and shall not see death?" "We see that wise men die, also the fool and brutish person perish." The prisoner in his dungeon, the peasant in his hut, the monarch in

his palace, the priest at the altar, all stand in this respect on a level. Among the countless millions of human beings who have lived on earth, only two have been excepted from that great law of dissolution, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Even these two cases of Enoch and Elijah were rather apparent than real exceptions—their bodies undergoing a change equivalent to death, since "flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of heaven."

While the stroke of death is thus inevitable, while the wise, the beautiful, the good, the ripe scholar, the eloquent orator, the holy and faithful minister of Christ, must as certainly as the wicked and the worthless go down to the land of silence, we know—and in this we shall find a rich source of consolation—that death never comes by chance. In no case, whether it be of feeble infancy, buoyant youth, mature manhood, or hoary age, whether of one whose decease is no more regarded than the fall of an autumn leaf, or of one whose loss fills a land with grief, is the event the result of accident. No! That moment so awful, so solemn, so irrevocably decisive, when the body turns to its earth, and the soul wings its mystic flight into eternity, is fixed by infinite wisdom and infinite goodness by Him who knows what is best, and who doeth all things well. When He issues the command, and not till then, "man's breath departs, and that very day his thoughts perish." And brittle as is the cord which binds soul and body, until God speaks the word, not all the powers of earth and hell combined can sever it. Every human being is immortal until his work is done, until all the purposes, whether of mercy or of wrath, for which God hath made him and placed him here, have been accomplished. Until then, the arrow that flieth by day can not touch him; the pestilence that walketh in darkness can not reach him; a thousand may fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, but it can not come nigh him.

And as it is with the time, so in regard to all the circumstances connected with our departure from this world. The

same gracious and perfect Wisdom which fixes the former, arranges the latter; they are all ordered by Him who has numbered the hairs of our head, who directs the flight of the swallow, and who holds the keys of Hades and of death. How precious is this truth to all the friends of Jesus—how well fitted to produce joyful hope and holy submission.

"Why should we mourn departing friends,
Or shake at death's alarms?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call them to his arms."

II. The Lord gives to his servants length of days, according to his own good pleasure and for the sake of others.

In the infancy of the world, human life was measured by centuries rather than by years; but as the race grew in numbers the period of men's earthly existence was gradually and greatly diminished, and many ages have elapsed since the Psalmist uttered those mournful strains: "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The instances in which this limit is overpassed are very rare, and the person who completes his century is as a "wonder unto many." Multitudes just open their eyes upon earth, and then close them forever. Between these two extremes—between the infant of an hour and the man an hundred years old—the length of human life is almost infinitely varied. Its average duration may be ascertained, and about how many out of a given number will reach a certain age, but in the case of the individual neither the profoundest wisdom nor the largest experience can tell, or even guess, the number of his days. All that we know or can say is, that it is determined by the good pleasure of the Lord, according to the counsel of his own will. We should suppose that personal excellence and eminent usefulness would be some guarantee of long life, yet we know they are not. Indeed, so often do we see the excellent ones of earth taken

away in the midst of their days, that the exhibition of unusual loveliness in early life is very apt to suggest the idea of an early death. I do not mean to say that this invariably happens, but only that there is no certain connection between eminent virtue or capacity for usefulness and a good old age, that we have no absolute warrant to expect long life even in the case of those whose services, as it seems to us, could be ill spared by the Church and by the world. Indeed, if those memorable words of Paul are to be taken as expressing a general fact, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better," it may be questioned whether length of days on earth is to be regarded as a blessing to the godly man personally. For the sooner death comes to him the sooner is he at rest; the sooner he exchanges a world of toil and trial, of sin and sorrow, for one of perfect and eternal light and bliss; the sooner he departs the sooner does he join the white-robed multitude with the Lamb upon Mount Zion. It may be, nay, we do not deny that it is good to be here, but it is far better to be where Christ is, with Christ, perfect in his likeness, and living in his immediate presence. Paul was perfectly assured that an unfading crown awaited him in heaven; he was well persuaded that every day he staid here below was just to defer so much longer the moment when he should possess the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; but if such were his Master's will, he was content to abide on earth, spending and being spent, filling up the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, ready to endure all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. And so are all who share in like precious faith and hope with Paul. Our divine Lord and Master keeps some of his servants here until the years of their ministry exceed the average of human life; others are taken away in the mid-time of their days; others still are called hence ere the dew of their youth has disappeared—they are summoned to lay aside the armor of

light just as they have put it on. In all this, God appears acting according to his sovereign will, amid clouds and darkness doing his pleasure; but blessed be his name, we know it is his *good* pleasure. There is in every case a reason for his procedure, though we can not discover it. Of this much, however, we may be certain, that when he spares a faithful minister for many years, it is for the sake of others; and when he takes away a faithful minister in early youth, or ripe manhood, to the saint himself his removal hence is unspeakable gain, to his family and his flock it is the gracious discipline of a loving Father and a covenant God, while to some among whom he had gone preaching the glad tidings, but has preached them in vain, it may be a wrathful judgment, the taking from them a candlestick they despised, because they loved darkness rather than light.

III. God's people ofttimes enjoy richer foretastes of heavenly blessedness as they approach their latter end.

Moses was not permitted, on account of his sin at Meribah, to conduct the tribes of Israel into the promised land. In a moment of passion he forgot that he was only a servant in the Lord's house, and spake unadvisedly with his lips. But though he was visited with a rod, the goodness and mercy of the Lord still followed him, and as the days of his ministry were drawing to a close, he was honored with special communion with God. He was permitted to look down the long vista of coming ages, and survey the varied fortunes of his beloved Israel. From the summit of Nebo he was enabled to get a distant but distinct view of that goodly land promised to his fathers for an everlasting inheritance. "The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees unto Zoar." The vision was doubtless supernatural, and was a befitting preparation for a death

so near. As his eyes close upon the hills and valleys, the green fields and sparkling streams of the earthly Canaan, they at once open to behold the far more exceeding scenery of the Better Country.

And thus has it been with many a servant of the Lord. I do not say with all of them, for in this, as in some other matters, God is a sovereign, and sometimes gives most impressive proof that his path is in the sea and his footsteps are not known. I have no doubt that God's own dear children have been sometimes left to walk in darkness up to the very borders of the grave, their inward fears and outward fightings ceasing only with their breath. But on the other hand many a saint who, like Moses, had been employed in the active service of the Redeemer, has, like Moses, received on the bed of death rich prelibations of the bliss awaiting them above. A very halo of holiness has seemed to rest upon them while they appeared to breathe the atmosphere of heaven. At eventide it has been light. They have been made to sit upon their high places, and have seen as they never saw before, "the King in his beauty." Thus was it with "Paul the aged," when he said: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand—henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Thus was it with John Welsh, one of Scotland's worthies in other days. So filled was he to overflowing with the joy unspeakable, that he exclaimed: "Hold thy hand, O Lord! thy servant is but an earthen vessel." Thus was it with Toplady, who, dying in the meridian of his days, styled himself the happiest of men. "Oh! what delights! what a bright sunshine has been spread around me. Surely no mortal man can live after glories such as God has manifested to my soul. All is light, light, light." Thus it was with Payson, who, when asked, "Do you feel reconciled to die?" replied: "Oh! that is too cold. I rejoice, I triumph—I can find no words to express my happiness." And thus has it been with

many more, who, amid the pains and languor of disease, have been brought to the very threshold of heaven; its everlasting doors have been opened and the light from within has streamed forth in divine effulgence upon their souls ere they entered the sanctuary of the skies to dwell amid its eternal splendors. Perhaps a still larger number of dying saints though strangers to the raptures of others, have nevertheless possessed an untroubled peace and an unwavering faith in the promised joys and glories of eternity. Their sun has gone down in calm serenity,

> ——As sets the morning star, which goes
> Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
> Obscured amid the tempests of the skies,
> But melts away into the light of heaven.

But whatever may be the circumstances attending the last hours of believers, we know that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Does the parent look with eager desire for the moment when he shall hear the footfall of the child who has been long a sojourner in a distant land? And is not the Christian, while in this present evil world, a pilgrim and a sojourner? Yes, so long as he is here in the body he is absent from the Lord. And hence we may well believe that that is a precious moment to Jesus the Saviour, when he welcomes to his immediate presence the soul for which he shed his blood—washed, sanctified, justified, complete in righteousness and bliss.

IV. The removal of faithful servants of the Lord may well excite the deep and sincere grief of those who have enjoyed their fellowship and labors.

Such grief is natural and proper. "The children of Israel mourned for Moses thirty days in the plains of Moab." The devout men who carried the mangled body of the martyr, Stephen, to the sepulchre, "made great lamentation over him."

Paul, in comforting the Thessalonian Christians, in view of the decease of those who slept in Jesus, recognizes the sacredness of grief. "We sorrow not as those who have no hope," but still we sorrow. It is the prompting of the nature which God has given us. To gaze upon the lifeless remains of the husband, the parent, the brother, the friend, the loving pastor; to take our last look of one bound to us by such ties, unmoved, would betray a heart wholly ignorant of the genius of the Gospel, and wholly destitute of the spirit of that divine Saviour who himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus.

Christianity does not make men stoics; she does not eradicate any of the principles and affections of our nature; she only purifies and exalts them. She does not forbid the indulgence of our joys or our griefs; she only seeks to moderate and control them. She does not look with disdainful eye upon the mourner's tears, for she gathers them in her bottle and writes them in her book, even when she comes, that with her loving hand she may apply the healing balm of Gilead to the stricken heart. Those to whom we are bound in the near and dear relationships of life, especially when they are adorned with the graces of the Gospel, are among God's most precious gifts to us. To part from them with apathy when death comes into our windows and carries them away, is to show that we have failed alike in appreciating the gift, and in the gratitude due to God who gave it. God himself bids the smitten household to weep as they stand around their loved one's new-made grave, or look upon that vacant place which shall know him no more forever. God himself calls the Church to mourn and lament when the godly man, eminent alike for personal excellence and active goodness, wholesome and growing influence, "fails from among the children of men." When a servant of the Lord—one fitted by the endowments of nature, the gifts of grace, the wisdom of ripened experience for wide usefulness, is summoned from the field of his labors, we may well

exclaim, as Elisha did: "My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and the horseman thereof." God means that we shall keenly feel such dispensations, for otherwise we should be in no suitable frame to learn the lessons he is teaching, and we should fail to gain the gracious and glorious end for which he subjects us to such discipline—that we may become partakers of his holiness.

V. The Lord's servants die and disappear at his command, but his Church survives, and he will never cease to provide the needful instruments to carry on his own work. After Moses, we are told there arose no prophet like unto him. In all that glorious succession, not one was the equal of him who died upon the top of Nebo. He was peerless, his loss seemed irreparable. In one sense it was. But though Moses was dead, the tribes of Israel did not stop at the foot of the mountain which contained his grave. Moses was gone, but Israel did not want a leader fully competent for the work intended to be done. Moses died in the land of Moab, but the host of God, that he had so long led, is soon again in motion. Jordan is crossed, the armies of Canaan are put to flight, the goodly land is won. So has it ever been, so will it ever be until the mystery of God is finished. Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers die, but Jesus lives, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The most distinguished, the most devoted, the most successful minister is only an earthen vessel, having nothing which he has not received; and we reflect upon the all-sufficiency and the watchful, loving care of the Church's Head, when we speak of the removal of any one in any sphere, however justly valued by us, as a loss which it is impossible to repair. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" Although the cistern at which we have been accustomed to slake our thirst be destroyed, the fountain that filled it survives;

although the star to which we were wont to look for guidance, and in whose light we for a season rejoiced, be extinguished, He who holds the stars in his right hand still lives—the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last—head over all things for the good of His body, the Church—Jesus, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. And one great end of such dispensations as the one over which we mourn, is to correct the false views we are apt to form respecting the Lord's work, to dissipate those needless anxieties to which we are so prone to yield in regard to the Lord's cause. Therefore he says, "Be still and know that I am God"—my purpose shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.

My dear friends! these lessons of God's word are pressed upon our consideration by that solemn event which has occasioned our present meeting. God who so lately gave you a pastor, one on whom you had built high hopes, and around whom your warm affections had begun to cluster, has taken him to Himself. Just as he has entered the new field of labor, and is girding himself for the duties of a new and arduous charge, in the mid-time of his days, the maturity of his strength, he is cut down. One end of our gathering here this evening is to do honor to his memory, and yet if his voice could reach us from those heavens where, I doubt not, his ransomed spirit now dwells, I am very confident that his earnest utterance would be: "Warn, instruct, entreat the living to be reconciled to God, to prepare for the coming eternity, but waste not time in eulogizing the dead." To himself, human praise and human censure are trifles lighter than air, but to us who remain behind, it may be useful to survey the grace of God in him.*

From the origin of this congregation, the attention of its members was turned to Dr. Polhemus, as, under God, a man

* The portion of the sermon that contained an account of the early life of Dr. Polhemus, and of his residence at Hopewell, having been incorporated with the Biographical Sketch, is here omitted.

eminently fitted to carry forward the important enterprise with success. He pondered the question of his coming hither with earnest and prayerful anxiety. If he had simply consulted his own personal ease and comfort, the matter might have had a speedy decision, and even in a higher view of the subject, there were considerations not without weight, inducing him to stay where he was. In the end, however, he believed that the Lord had called him to go to Newark, and in this faith he never wavered. But, after all, it was no easy task to go; it was no slight trial to sunder the bonds which had been created during a happy and useful pastorate of twenty years. Farewell, was a hard word for him to say to such a people as he had been living among, and had ministered to so long; nor was it easier for them to consent to give up such a pastor. You will, I am sure, bear with me for saying that I shall ever honor and love the congregation of Hopewell for the earnest resistance they made to the removal of my dear brother, with whom and among whom, it has been my privilege to spend so many delightful Sabbaths, and so much Christian fellowship. He came to Newark in the noon of his manhood and the fullness of his strength, with the promise of many years of labor and of large success. He came here and received a cordial welcome from many brethren in various branches of the Church. He came a comparative stranger, yet almost immediately he found himself surrounded by warmly attached friends, for his manly form and noble presence were but the index of scarcely less obvious and still nobler qualities of mind and heart. Hardly six months have elapsed since in this very church he stood up to take upon himself the pastor's vows, and from this same spot, only a week ago, his mortal remains were borne to the grave by a great multitude of devout men and of weeping friends, and now he sleeps in Jesus, in yonder sepulchre on the banks of the Passaic.

With the circumstances connected with his last illness, and the record of his dying exercises, you have been already made acquainted.* Suffice it to say, that on the 12th of August last, he came to Newburgh, purposing to stay there only a few days, but as the result showed, it was to spend three wearisome months on the bed of languishing, often tortured with exquisite pain, and to die there at the command of the Lord. From an early period of his sickness he was impressed with the belief that it would be unto death. But the prospect did not dismay him. He "knew in whom he had believed." His patience under his sufferings, and his considerate regard for others, were most exemplary. The tokens of affectionate interest which he was constantly receiving from his own people and other friends in Newark, deeply touched his heart, and he often expressed the wish that he might be able to tell them all how much he valued their love. For the sake of his infant church, of his beloved wife, so long accustomed to lean on his strong arm, and of their dear children—four of whom were too young to appreciate the loss of such a father—he desired to live, if such were his Master's will. But to that will he bowed joyfully as well as submissively. More than once he said: "I have peace —perfect peace."

With the calm confidence of a believer in Jesus he was enabled to commit those most dear to him to the care of a covenant God, and on the bed of death he preached to them the same precious faith which they had heard him proclaim from the pulpit. Only once, a day or two before his departure, did a cloud darken his mind, and then it was only for a moment. "At eventide it was light." And as he went down into the dark valley, and his feet touched the cold waters of the river of death, he beheld Him whom his soul loved. "I see Jesus," said he, "and now I can no more come back." The only thing he dreaded, and from which he had specially prayed to be de-

* They were given by Dr. De Witt on the day of the funeral.

livered, the agonies of dissolution, he was mercifully spared. Without a groan, without a struggle, without a sigh even, he sweetly fell asleep.

Dear Brother! thou hast been taken from us in the meridian of thy days, and many hearts have been made to bleed; but it is our Master's will that thou shouldst go; thy work was finished; thou hast entered into rest.

"Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

DR. POLHEMUS'S SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE PREACHER'S THEME.

"I DETERMINED not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—1 COR. 2 : 2.

NEVER did the Apostle Paul receive a nobler compliment than that pronounced by certain "vagabond," that is, wandering Jewish exorcists, who attempted to cast out evil spirits by saying: "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." It showed not only that they had witnessed the magic power of that name in the mouth of the Apostle, but also, his enemies being witnesses, that Paul was faithful to his high commission, and to his solemn professions.

It is said to have been the wish of St. Augustin, one of the most distinguished fathers of the early Church, that he could have seen Paul in the pulpit. We do not think that this desire was dictated by a mere idle curiosity—a desire simply of looking upon the man or of hearing him preach, but rather of seeing how he was impressed with the awful trust committed to him; it was a desire that he might have witnessed Paul's zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and have listened to that eloquence which was mighty, not by reason of its external adornment, but by its clear logic, its fearless declarations of the whole counsel of God, its discriminating and searching appeals to the consciences of his hearers. If he could have had his wish, methinks he would have seen something corresponding to the history of his conversion. You remember that Paul then heard the voice of Christ saying: "Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may

receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26 : 27.) No other preacher ever received his commission in terms and under circumstances so remarkable as these. Paul, as he told Agrippa, "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision;" and his sermons and his epistles are his witnesses that he never forgot it.

Paul, centuries ago, entered into his rest, having fulfilled his course. When we see him, it shall not be in the pulpit, but among the leaders of that glorious company that celebrate God's free grace, forever, in heaven. Being dead he yet speaketh; and if the Church of Christ should ever lose sight of the pure Gospel, or, corrupting it by rites and ceremonies, and traditions of men, should make it another gospel, and if, in that case, God, for the sake of a remnant whom he would save, should determine to send back to earth one of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb," who can doubt that Paul would be the chosen messenger from heaven, and that these very words of my text would express the grand theme of his ministry: "I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

We judge of what would be, from what hath been. The Gospel, which is founded upon the character of God, and the necessities of fallen man, is the same in all ages. What Paul preached when in the flesh, he would preach again if he were here below. In every place he testified repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. On every occasion the doctrine of Christ crucified was his leading and distinguishing theme; on this doctrine he insisted as the one which more than any other illustrated the glory of God and advanced the happiness of man. "We preach *not* ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1 : 23, 24.) It was by the manifestation of this truth that the apostles commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We say

to *every* man's conscience. Paul preached but one gospel at Damascus, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Rome. Whether he stood upon the hill of Mars, in sight of the altar bearing the inscription, "To the unknown God," or walked amid the gorgeous yet tasteful palaces of Corinth, he beheld the tokens of "the wide-spread malady," which philosophy vainly attempted to mitigate, for which he knew the Gospel was the only remedy; and so he was prepared to stand or fall by the result of the simple declaration of "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

While these words fell with a peculiar propriety from the lips of him who first uttered them, they are, at the same time, eminently befitting, as they will be heartily adopted by the true minister of Christ in every age. In directing your attention to the subject here presented, let me

I. Explain this determination of the Apostle.

We are not to infer from this statement, that the preaching of Paul was so exclusively occupied with this theme, that no other topic was ever discussed by him. He speaks of having set forth Christ crucified before the eyes of the Galatians; yet we are not to suppose that he confined himself to the exhibition of the awful scenes on Calvary, but that the death of Christ—its nature, its design, its results—was the grand central doctrine of the system he promulgated. In fact, his preaching had a wide range, embracing within its sweep all things that concerned the kingdom of God, and the great salvation.

Again, these words must be understood not in an absolute but comparative sense. Paul did not despise all other knowledge. Every thing which God has made is a proper subject of study; and science of every kind is useful to the preacher if rightly employed. But the knowledge of Christ has a transcendent excellence and importance, and all other knowledge is to its possessor, if ignorant of Christ, insignificant and vain.

This determination of Paul, shows us, 1. What was the subject-matter of his study and preaching. It was Jesus Christ. It was not Jewish traditions; it was not Gentile philosophy, but it was Jesus the Christ, "in whom are hid all the

treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It shows, 2. Under what aspect and relation he chose to study and preach Jesus Christ. It was as "crucified." It was *Christ* above all other topics, and Christ *crucified*, above all other considerations. Jesus Christ crucified. Each of these words has a world of meaning. *Jesus* signifies Saviour. It is a name which affords peculiar and inestimable comfort to the believing mind. It can never be too much considered by those who hope to share the blessings, which he who bore it brought into the world. "In this name the whole Gospel lies hid. It is the light, food, and medicine of the soul." It includes so much, as applied to Messiah, that no one word in any language, can fully express the idea it conveys. It is meant to signify that He delivers from all evil, preserves to all good, and maintains the objects of his salvation in a state of security and blessedness forever. This title, so expressive of redemption, was applied to the human nature of Christ, before it was assumed. An angel from heaven announced to his virgin mother, that "his name should be called Jesus," (Luke 1 : 30, 33 ;) and after his birth, a multitude of the heavenly host brought to the humble shepherds of Bethlehem, that message of abundant joy : "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2 : 11.)

God had frequently, in past ages, raised up "saviours" to his people, for temporal purposes, and they had received this honorable appellation. The first who bore the name, was the son of Nun, the successor of Moses. Joshua and Jesus are the same name, the first being its Hebrew form, the latter its Greek. (See Acts 7 : 45 ; Heb. 4 : 8.) But while this name was applied to those whom God had sent to be the deliverers and leaders of his people, it could not properly be said of any one of them, that he was *the Saviour, the Lord.* Not one of them was a saviour able to bring salvation to the people, in the plenitude of his own power, and by the might of his own arm. No mere man could become, in the highest sense, Jesus, Saviour, because unable to execute the office. Deity alone could

recover guilty creatures, and yet Deity *alone* (with reverence be it said) could not be the Saviour in the sense here intended, because he must be born of a virgin, and become a man of sorrows. He must be man as well as God, and God as well as man, else he could not be the Saviour, mighty to save; but being both, he was capable of performing all that was given him to do. His birth and his sufferings proved his humanity; his miracles and his resurrection from the dead, his essential divinity. (Rom. 1 : 2.) Jehovah became Jesus that in a way consistent with his glorious perfections, he might save his people from their sins. As Jesus, having our nature, he could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4 : 15.) He could offer himself up without spot to God, in our stead, and purge our sins by the sacrifice of himself. As Jehovah, he was able to accomplish all the purposes of his grace, and by a merit which could satisfy justice, bring in everlasting salvation for his people. Such is the Blessed Person whom the Apostle here declares he was determined to "know."

He bears another title generally annexed to Jesus, namely, *Christ*, the Anointed. Under the Old Testament dispensation, persons and things were anointed, when set apart for some special and sacred end. These were feeble representatives of Christ, the true anointed of God. The oil, however, was only the emblem of the Holy Spirit with which Jesus was anointed without measure. "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Prov. 45 : 7.) God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts 10 : 38.) The unction was the token of the divine appointment to office. Christ was thus divinely appointed to his office, for at his baptism there came a voice from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son; hear him." The oil denoted the divinely-given qualifications for the office to which the person anointed was set apart. Christ was thus divinely qualified for his offices, when he received the unction of the Holy Ghost. Scripture tells us of three classes of persons who

were consecrated to office by anointing—the prophets, the high priests, and the kings. All these offices are united in the person of our Lord, and are all included under his title of Christ, or the Anointed.

Jesus is the anointed Prophet, for Isaiah thus wrote of him: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." And accordingly, our Lord, in the synagogue of Nazareth, having read these words to the people, applied them to himself, saying: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4 : 21.) Jesus is the anointed Priest, and in execution of his office he gave himself "a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor;" and he now intercedes for his people, their never-ceasing and effectual advocate before the throne of God. Jesus is the anointed King in Zion. He has already proved, and will continue to prove, that he has been anointed not to an empty title without royal power, but to a dominion founded in complete victory over all his enemies, and the perfect and eternal blessedness of his redeemed. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet"—Sin, Satan, Death, and Hell shall all be vanquished. All this is included under the title of Christ. *This Jesus the Christ*, did Paul preach and constantly hold forth, and this same Christ do I now proclaim to you, and purpose to make the great theme of my teaching.

But it is not upon the *name* of Jesus that we rest our hopes of salvation, neither is it upon the anointing of Christ. That which Paul was determined to know, and upon which he dwelt, was *Christ crucified.* This was the special character in which he resolved to study and preach Christ. "Jesus Christ they know in heaven; Jesus Christ and him crucified, sinners are to know on the earth." To you and to me, as guilty creatures, Christ crucified is every thing, the foundation of all our hopes. It is the keystone of the arch of salvation. Paul singles out this, as being of all views of Christ the most excellent—the one which captivated and sustained his soul. All else that Christ did would have been useless to us, if he had not died

upon the cross; we would have found no comfort in looking to him, if he had not "given his life a ransom for many." The great means of reaching the sinner's heart is not so much by holding up before him Christ as an example of holiness, as by showing him Christ dying on the cross. Here, at the cross, we learn lessons which are taught no where else. Here, we behold the complete ratification of all the purposes and promises of God. Christ left the abodes of bliss and came into the world for the express purpose of being crucified. It was part of the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. The Lord of life often spoke of it to his disciples, and there seemed (if we may so speak) something brooding on his mind in reference to this great transaction, during the whole of his ministry on earth. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the subject of his converse with Moses and Elias was, the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

The moment that Paul was forced to abandon his self-righteous hopes, his eye turned to Calvary. He who once had trusted in the righteousness of the law, now preached Christ and him crucified, as the only hope of the sinner. He who fancied he "had whereof to glory" in his legal observances, his circumcision, his tithes, his fastings, is heard saying: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He saw in the Crucified One the antetype of the Passover, whose blood sprinkled upon the conscience would cause the destroying angel to pass by. He saw in him the antetype of the scapegoat, bearing all the sins of his people, and carrying them away to a land of forgetfulness. He looked at the cross, and found in it the answer to Job's question, "How shall man be just with God?" for there he saw mercy and truth met together; he saw God humbling his only-begotten Son, that he might bring many sons unto glory. To the Apostle, the cross was "the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits" — pardon, peace, holiness, eternal glory. Standing at the foot of the cross, he could open his mouth boldly, with the assurance that there was not a blessing in all

God's storehouse which he might not freely offer to the chief of sinners. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all hings." Such was Paul's logic, which he learned and used beneath the cross. Make it yours, my hearers, and you will and it better worth knowing than any other logic under heaven. It will solve more doubts, it will clear away more mists, it will shed more light, it will bring more assurance and sweeter comforts, than all the learning of the schools or the wisdom of the world, causing you to sing:

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.

"Here I'll sit forever viewing
Mercy's streams, in streams of *blood!*
Precious drops my soul bedewing
Plead and claim my peace with God."

O my hearer! go to the cross, and cry before heaven and earth: "I am determined not to know any thing, save Jesus and him crucified."

II. We promised to vindicate this determination of the apostle. There are various grounds on which it may be defended.

1. Paul was determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ and him crucified, because he sought for the souls of men. No one who attentively considers the life and character of the apostle to the Gentiles can doubt that his one great object was to win souls to Christ. If he had sought his own fame or his temporal comfort, he would never have rehearsed to the men of Corinth the story of Calvary. He could have reasoned as profoundly, and spoken as eloquently, as any of the philosophers or orators of Greece, but his aim was not to secure applause for himself, but to bring souls to Jesus. He had learned the value of the soul by the redemption-price paid for it on the cross. The vision of the man of Macedonia

praying him to "come over and help us," at once decided him to start for Philippi, though he knew not what perils were in the way. The sight at Athens, of "a city wholly given to idolatry," stirred his inmost soul. As he thought of the condition of his unbelieving Jewish brethren, he had "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart." Did he find blinded pagans offering their ignorant homage at the altar of "an unknown god?" to them he preached the Gospel which reveals the true object of worship. Did he encounter men with hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? he knew that Christ alone could heal the maladies and soften the hardness of their rebel souls. He knew that the doctrine of the cross met the necessities of every human being, and was able to overcome the resistance and slay the enmity of its most obstinate foes.

In every age moralists and philosophers have tried in various ways to elevate the character of fallen man, but all their endeavors have proved utterly abortive; and no wonder, for they have ignored his condition as a guilty and lost sinner. They have attempted to raise a superstructure of excellence upon a false foundation. See how Paul brings his great theme to bear upon the point. "We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead." He began at the fountain-head when he would purify the streams. We must begin with the heart, if we would affect the life and change the character. But how shall we reach and renovate the rebel heart?

> "In vain we search, in vain we try
> Till Jesus brings his Gospel nigh."

Paul knew this well. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," said he to the Romans, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." He knew this was the only truth that could penetrate the soul indurated by sin, bring peace to the wounded conscience, inspire a hope of pardon and a love of holiness. This judgment of the Apostle was founded both upon experience and observation. He knew that the Gospel was powerful to save, for it had saved

him; it had opened his eyes, and had turned him from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; it had made him dead to the world, and alive only to God.

What he saw in others confirmed the same glorious truth, that there is salvation in Christ, and in him alone; that there can be no growth in goodness but as there is growth in the knowledge of Christ and him crucified. And therefore, as his heart's desire and prayer to God was that his fellow-creatures might be saved, he determined to make Christ crucified the exclusive theme of his preaching. And who that looks at the results of his ministry, and the manner in which he finished his course, can refrain to join him in saying, "I too am determined not to know any thing save Christ crucified"? Corinth herself was the witness of Paul's success. "Ye are our epistle," said he to the Christians there, "known and read of all men." "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." But—

2. Paul was thus determined, because he aimed to promote the glory of God. This is man's chief end. The prayer of Christ, is that of every child of God. "Father, glorify thy name." This was eminently true of Paul. "Whether, therefore," said he to the Corinthians, "ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." And you, who are familiar with his epistles, know how thoroughly pervaded they all are with this sentiment.

Now it was by the faithful exhibition of Christ crucified that he could most effectually secure this end. The influence of this great theme on the minds of those who received it was such as to bring the highest honor to the divine name. The Apostle himself was a striking illustration of this fact. When he became a preacher of the faith which he had once labored to destroy, the churches of Judea heard of the change and "glorified God in him." This is the truth, which, above all others, the Holy Spirit, the glorifier of Christ, employs in the conversion of sinners, and which he applies with sovereign

energy to the heart. The wisdom, power, love, and goodness of God are no where so illustriously manifested as in the spectacle of a soul rescued from hell, restored to the divine image, invested with a title to heaven, and a meetness for the heritage of saints. And because such results flowed from the preaching of Christ crucified, and from nothing else, Paul resolved to make this his only theme. But—

3. Paul thus determined, in order that he might maintain his fidelity, and be found blameless in the day of Christ.

This consideration, doubtless, powerfully influenced his mind, as it should the mind of every Christian minister. It is the duty of a servant sent with a message from his master, to deliver it just as he received it. Now Paul was Christ's servant, and he was bound to deliver Christ's message exactly as it was given to him. His own likes and dislikes had nothing to do with the matter; neither was he at liberty to consider whether something else might not be more suitable to those whom he was called to address; the simple question was: "What has Christ commanded me to preach?" When the Lord called him to the ministry, a great trust had been committed to him; he was charged to testify of Christ, to preach the Gospel, and therefore "necessity was laid upon him, yea woe was unto him if he did not preach" it. He was a steward of the mysteries of God, and as such he was required to be faithful. He was a builder, "together with God," in the erection of a spiritual edifice, and as such it behooved him perpetually to work as under the eye of his divine Master, building on the true foundation, and using for the superstructure only the "living stones" which grace supplied. He was a herald of Christ, and as such, it became him boldly to proclaim the titles of his heavenly King. And he did it. No obstacles, no persecutions turned him aside. None of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto himself that he might finish his course with joy and the ministry he had received from the Lord Jesus. In all his ministrations he remembered that ministers and people would one day con-

front each other before the bar of God, and that the condemnation of an unfaithful minister of Jesus Christ would be of all others the most terrible. He desired so to fulfill his commission that he might abide the scrutiny of that day. He preached with the future world full in view, watching as one who must give account. "Woe is me," said he, "if I preach not the Gospel." When God made inquisition for blood, he meant that none should be found in his skirts. Therefore he kept steadily to his one great theme; he went through the world preaching Christ, so that when at last he gave up his account, he might be able to say, in words uttered prophetically by his Master: "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord! thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness." (Psalm 40 : 9, 10.)

My brethren, it was not necessary for me to introduce this subject by showing its applicability to the circumstances of our present assemblage. I stand here to-day as the pastor solemnly installed over you by the proper authorities of the Church. I am here not only to preach, but to have the care of souls; to look upon you not as strangers, but as my own people. I feel, and I desire you to feel the deep responsibility of my office and my position. I do not regret that I am here. It was not without much deliberation, consultation with my ministerial brethren, and fervent prayer to God for guidance, that my mind was brought to acquiesce in what I now believe was my duty. You will not be surprised at the conflict through which I have been called to pass, when I tell you that God cast my lot among a most affectionate and kind-hearted people, with whom for almost twenty-two years I lived in uninterrupted harmony—a harmony which to my knowledge was never broken by a single jealousy; a people, among whom God was pleased to bless my labors, and who, without a dissenting voice, besought me not to leave them. On the other hand, the entire unanimity of your call, and the peculiar circumstances under which it was given, made it impossible for

me to decline it. And it was relief at last, when in the providence of God the decision of the question which tried me as I had never been tried before, devolved upon others rather than myself. My brethren of the Classis sent me here. And I must say that the people of Hopewell, after the first gush of disappointment was over, not only acquiesced in the disposal of Providence, but crowned the kindnesses of more than twenty years, by sending me to you with their prayers. Never have I heard more earnest supplications for this church than those offered in our weekly prayer-meetings at Hopewell, uttered in sentences often broken by deep emotion. I would have *you* catch the spirit of those prayers, and send it back to heaven for a blessing upon them. The generous kindness you have shown to me and mine have made me almost forget the sacrifices which I felt I must make, not in coming here, but in going any where. Your kind courtesy is appreciated. And the heartiness with which you have given yourselves to this new work is not only a pledge of its prosperity, but an evidence to your pastor that he will not have to stand or to labor alone.

Brethren, this is an important moment, not to me only, but to yourselves, your families, your children, your neighbors. You are beginning a new era in your religious history. New duties will devolve upon you, as well as new hopes be excited in you. I ask that this may be a day of solemn dedication of people as well as pastor to Jesus Christ. We have jointly put our hand to the work. I have made, and do make again this day, in the presence of you all, a solemn surrender of the faculties of my mind and the energies of my body to my Lord and Master, to be sanctified and employed by him in winning souls to him. This is my ambition, this is the high prize I aim to possess—souls, who shall be to you and me crowns of rejoicing in the day of Christ. Let every heart in this assembly say, Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do? Every man, and every woman, must have a share in the labor, if they have given themselves up to Christ. There must be no drones in

this spiritual hive. The times demand industry and effort, and each of you must be content to work with your minister, for God. Remember that love to God and love to souls are among the first elements of a church's prosperity. Let there be too a spirit of prayer ever exhibited; prayer which looks for the results of its pleadings; prayer which counts with confidence on the coming blessing. Then may we be sure that the Lord will remember this vine which his own hand hath planted; your minister's heart will be strengthened, his heart will be cheered, you will see him happy, and you yourselves be the sharers of his joy.

Brethren, I have to-day set before you the great theme of my preaching. You have called me to preach the Gospel to you, and, God helping me, I mean to preach the truth as it is in Jesus. Other topics might have the charm of novelty, might attract crowds to hear the preacher, but this is the truth that draws men to Christ, and saves their souls. I mean it to be understood that he who comes here, must come to have his soul fed with the living bread that is from heaven. I have no doubt either as to the wisdom or the policy even of such preaching. I wish to preach Christ, and so to preach him, that come who may into our assembly, they will feel that this church is set for the defense of the Gospel. Yes, I wish to preach Christ, in the divinity of his person; Christ, in the authority of his mission; Christ, in the holiness of his example; Christ, in the tenderness of his compassion; Christ, in the vicariousness of his sufferings; Christ, in the prevalence of his intercession; Christ, in the glories of his royalty; Christ, in the richness of the blessings imparted to those whom he has accepted and promised to bring to the fullness of joy in heaven. Yes, brethren, Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last; and he who aspires to the service of such a Master, and would meet its high responsibilities, must stand near to the altar where still is found the sprinkled blood of Him who was there a victim and a sacrifice, and then utter the

solemn vow, to be heard on earth and in heaven: "I am determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ—crucified."

You must not, therefore, complain if there be some little sameness in our ministrations, if old truths are repeated, "line upon line, precept upon precept." And yet there should be to us a charm of novelty in the doctrine of Christ. The theme is inexhaustible. It is a treasury out of which you may perpetually bring things new as well as old. You do not complain because bread is placed every day upon your table. The thirsty man never complains of the ceaseless murmurs of the cooling brook as it pursues its way beside his path. The light of heaven is never unwelcome to us, as morning after morning it dawns upon us. And that sermon should not fail to awaken interest, which exhibits Him who is the true bread and water of life, "the true light that lighteth every man that comes into the world." Every one to whom the name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth, will rejoice to hear it pronounced by the preacher's lips; he will always come to the sanctuary with the hope and desire of getting some fresh view of the grace and the glory of Him whom his soul loveth; and he will never be better pleased than when he sees his pastor standing beneath the cross, and gathering fruits from the tree of life, and as he offers them to the people, begging them to eat and live forever.

This infant church has no apology to offer for its existence. It is here by the deliberate and prayerful choice of those who had a right to resolve that they would erect another house for the worship of God our Saviour. You will have no doubt either of the need of a new church, or of the fitness of its location, when I tell you that other parties stood ready to occupy the ground if we had abandoned it. And now that we have put our hands to the work, they bid us God speed. We have no wish to draw away the members of sister churches, where the truth is preached and souls are fed with living bread. Far from us be such an aim. No. We seek first of all to provide for the growing wants of our own communion, and

at the same time to gather in those who are as sheep without a shepherd. To all who may prefer our company, or our church order and polity, we say: "Come with us and we will do you good." We are thankful for the expressions of good-will that have been made by Christians of every denomination with whom we have been brought into contact, and we heartily reciprocate their love. We give a cordial welcome to all who are inclined to worship with us statedly or occasionally; and if we do not greatly deceive ourselves, we are sure that they will never find occasion of grief by the undue glorification of ourselves, or of "our Church," or by offensive allusions to others. We mean to preach the truth freely, fully, boldly, but always "in love," in the exercise of the charity which hopeth all things, and of the Christian courtesy which should never be absent from a Christian pulpit.

And now, brethren, the time is come to build the Lord's house; and the voice of our God is heard, saying with a special emphasis to us: "Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord; from this day will I bless you." (Hag. 1 : 8, 11, 17.) Yes, there is a blessing in this work. "They shall prosper that love thee." (Psalm 122 : 6.) Do you lay the stones of this building, in the faith of that Saviour whom we preach, for the glory of the God whom we serve, and ye shall yourselves, at last, as "precious stones," as "living stones," be built into the "temple made without hands, eternal in the heavens." Let us not fear we shall fail, but be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." If fail we must in our enterprise, let it be with our eyes heavenward; let it be in the attitude in which men never failed before, "looking to the hills whence cometh help;" let it be such a failure as would cause sorrow in heaven and joy in hell; let it be such a failure as—but why make the needless supposition? No. Let him who is fearful and unbelieving remove his hand from the plough, and turn back, but let all who hope in God, go forward and see his salvation.

SERMON II.

THE PENITENT THIEF.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—Luke 23 : 42, 43.

The history of our Lord Jesus Christ while tabernacling in human flesh, is full of wonders. From its commencement to its close, it grows in interest, as we discover the constantly increasing evidences of the divine character and mission of Jesus of Nazareth. At Cana in Galilee, where our Lord performed his first miracle, by changing water into wine, we see the earliest forth-putting of that power which wrought a far more marvellous transformation when it converted a dying thief into a believing penitent, and the next instant into an adoring seraph. In both cases omnipotence was demanded to effect the result, but the latter miracle exhibited not only the Almighty power, but the boundless grace of the Son of God. The water changed into wine at Cana, "perished in the using;" but the sinner converted into a new creature on Calvary, now helps to swell, and will forever sing the anthem of redemption in heaven.

The event brought before us in the text is the most interesting, the most important, that can occur to any human being—it is the salvation of a soul. An immortal on the brink of eternity, sunk in sin and ready to perish, is plucked as a brand from the burning, and is made an heir of everlasting life. It was truly said by our blessed Lord, of the fierce multitude who cried out, "Crucify him!"—"They know not what they do." When they placed him between two thieves, their object was to aggravate the shame and infamy of the cross; but He who can cause even the wrath of man to praise him, converts the insult of his murderers into an occasion for a most signal dis-

play of his omnipotence and his love. Jesus had said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And now, as if to confirm that word, he is no sooner nailed to the cross of death, than he draws one polluted soul to the fountain open for sin; and as the cry, "It is finished!" dies upon his lips, he bears away with him to Paradise one trophy of his victorious grace, one pledge of his triumph over death and hell.

In guiding your meditations upon these words, let me direct your attention,

I. To the person to whom the prayer was addressed

Here are three crosses, on each of which hangs a sufferer. But He who is suspended on the middle one, though to outward appearance only a man like the rest, is really a being concerning whom it is said: "Let all the angels of God worship him." He is the Holy One of God. The prayer is presented to the Lord of Glory, the great God our Saviour. But these are strange circumstances in which to find one who could claim these magnificent titles. He is despised and rejected of men; He is dying a death as ignominious as it is cruel; those who had been his disciples have fled—all of them, except his virgin mother according to the flesh, who, with a few other desolate women, is weeping over the mournful spectacle. The wicked rabble exclaim, in mockery: "He saved others; let himself now come down from the cross and we will believe." Even one of the malefactors at his side repeats the taunt, and "railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." Never was the glory of the Saviour's divinity more completely veiled. The might and the majesty which shone forth so illustriously in his miracles, in his feeding the hungry multitude, stilling the tempests, healing the sick, are now obscured by the dark, gathering clouds of death. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together (successfully as it seemed) against the Lord and his anointed." (Ps. 2 : 2.) But deep as was the darkness which enveloped the Holy Jesus, a ray of his divine glory pierced it, and reached

at least one poor sinner, the dying thief. To him it is the light of life. He confesses his guilt, he believes, he repents, and in full assurance of faith prays: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

II. Who was it that presented this memorable prayer? Who was it that gave this striking confidence in Jesus, at the the very moment when most of those who had known him longest and best, forsook him and fled? Was it the beloved disciple who had leaned on his bosom? or was it "that other disciple," who had said, "I am ready to go with thee to prison and to death; though all be offended because of thee, yet will not I"? No; it was neither of these. It was one who, perchance, had never seen Jesus, until he beheld him at his side toiling up the ascent of Calvary, bearing his cross. He is one of two malefactors, whose condemnation to death for their crimes was confessedly just. They had transgressed both human and divine law, and were now suffering the penalty of their offenses. Yet between the two there was a wide difference in character, such as often exists between men who, before the law, are companions in guilt and in punishment. One of them seems to have been hardened in wickedness, with no fear of a judgment to come, and even amid the agonies of a lingering and most painful death, reviled a fellow-sufferer, who had never done him the slightest injury by word or deed. He scoffs at goodness, and expires with a heart full of evil. The other seems profoundly impressed with the awfulness of his situation. He looks into eternity, now so near, and fears that when his crimes against man and society have been expiated by his bodily death, there may be another tribunal before which he must appear, and that his sufferings on earth, however painful and protracted, will not be accepted there as an atonement for his sins against God. He is sensible of the ill conduct of his associate, and faithfully rebukes him for it. He has watched—as we may well believe—the Saviour's demeanor during the awful scenes then enacting, and beholds in

him the fulfillment of ancient prophecy—"he is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He listens with wonder to the prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;" it penetrates his soul, and prompts him to say in his heart: "Is not this the Christ?" The spirit of the poor thief was gone, ere the darkened heavens, the quaking earth, and the rending rocks, compelled the confession of the Roman centurion: "Truly, this man was the Son of God." But his faith had needed no such confirmation, he had required no such testimonies to convince him that he was hanging by the side of One mighty to save. The Spirit took of the things of Christ and showed them unto him. And now when the pulse of life is beating feebly, and his eye is growing dim in death, and the world is fading from his view, he turns to Jesus with the look of faith, and breathes the prayer: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

III. Let us now examine the prayer itself. Probably it was the first prayer the poor thief had ever uttered; certainly he had never before prayed "believing," and yet like that of the publican, it is a *model* prayer, brief, expressive, replete with a sense of need, and of Christ's all-sufficiency. It is a prayer betokening "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." As before remarked, it was connected with a confession of his guilt, and the justice of the sentence which doomed him to the cross. Mark how quickly he passes from rebuking his companion to the condemnation of himself: "Dost thou not fear God seeing thou art in the same condemnation, *and we indeed justly*, for we receive the due reward of our deeds?"

Now, can you read these words and doubt that the Spirit, who convinces of sin, and righteousness, and of judgment to come, was at work in this man's heart? Like David, he exclaimed, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid." His prayer, when duly considered, will ap-

pear very remarkable. It implied on his part, a firm belief in the immortality of the soul. It implied a deep conviction of his need of a Saviour. He did not suppose, as we have said, that his bodily pains would or could atone for his guilt before God. Even at the moment of keenest anguish he evidently feels that this availed nothing with the Holy One, and therefore he seeks help from Him on whom "help is laid." The prayer implied a hope, if not a conviction, that his case was not absolutely desperate. His situation might naturally have led him to despair, but his petition to Christ clearly evinced that he had a reliance in his mercy. Often had our Lord been asked to heal the maladies of the body, but few if any of those who came to him besought him that their souls might "prosper and be in health." The poor thief begs only for spiritual blessings; he did not ask that his life might be prolonged; he did not ask that the tortures of the cross might be alleviated or shortened, but only that his soul might be saved, that he might be remembered by Christ when he entered into his kingdom.

This prayer also implied a conviction that Christ is a divine Saviour. Our Lord had claimed to be a king—not such a king, indeed, as the Jews expected and desired—and for this reason he was accused, condemned, crucified. Yet, there on the cross did this poor, dying, but now believing thief, recognize the divine dignity of his person, and confess him to be the promised King of Israel. How rapidly did he perceive and embrace the truth, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost! But a moment ago, he simply acknowledges that Jesus was an innocent sufferer; now, he calls him *Lord*. Though like himself nailed to a cross, the dying thief addresses him as if he had been seated on his throne, and renders to him adoring homage as the Lord of Life, the Sovereign of the invisible world. He sees the glory of the Redeemer's divinity shining through all his present abasement, and with a faith such as had not been seen in Israel, the penitent thief commits into his

hands his interests for eternity. Yes, here was *great* faith, here was a faith greater even than that possessed by the apostles at the time. "We trusted," said they, in a tone which showed that their trust was gone, "that this was He who should have redeemed Israel." The poor thief, taught by the Spirit of God, formed a juster estimate of the character of Jesus, than they did who had "companied with him" so long. He seems to have comprehended, at once, the fact that the shame of the cross was the condition of the "seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high;" that the Captain of Salvation must be made perfect by suffering.

Again, this prayer was a testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, as well as his divinity. It expressed his belief in the efficacy of Christ's blood for pardon and salvation, and that through it alone can these blessings be obtained. We challenge then, for the faith of this poor thief the highest consideration and respect. I know that millions of God's people have since had, and now have, "like precious faith;" but faith *in whom?* In Him who was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead;" in Him who was proved by many infallible signs to have been exalted a Prince and a Saviour. But look at the faith of the dying malefactor. He believed in the Crucified One at the very moment when all the disciples, in dismay and despair, forsook him and fled to their homes; and when other hearts failed and fainted, he trusted the dying Jesus with his eternal all. Yes! believing thief, thou art a miracle of grace! a glorious monument of the all-conquering energy of faith!

True faith, it has been justly said, is always humble. Mark the humility displayed in the petition of the thief. He does not, like the mother of Zebedee's children, ask for a seat either on the right or the left hand of Christ in his kingdom. No. He only begs to be remembered. It is such a request as Joseph made of the chief butler, whose restoration to royal favor he predicted—"Think on me when it shall be well with thee."

What lowliness is here! He aspires only to be "remembered." And, oh! how sweet and sure a hope he had that Jesus would *not* forget him, when "glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." The chief butler, amid the recovered joys of the palace, might forget that poor Joseph was still in prison; but Jesus the Saviour would not forget the poor thief who trusted in him amid the shame and the agonies of the cross. Is there a heart here that will not adopt and repeat the dying malefactor's prayer, "Lord, remember me?" Do we not need as much as he, to be remembered of Jesus? If you do not go to Jesus in faith, you will be forgotten by him, and if forgotten, you are lost forever. But if, renouncing every other hope and refuge, you come to him, and cast yourself upon his mercy, just as the poor dying thief did, you will find, to your eternal joy, that no one who asked in penitential faith, ever asked in vain, "Lord, remember me."

IV. The answer of our Lord. The converted thief having offered his single and brief petition, if I may so speak, rested his case. He awaits the issue of his prayer. Nor did he wait long. Christ, who had never refused any who came to him, seeking relief from bodily disease, now evinces equal readiness to heal the maladies of the soul. He grants the prayer of the thief without a moment's hesitation. The faith that was so noble was most promptly honored. The sin was pardoned, the penitent was received, his soul was saved. The instant and gracious answer is: "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Jesus spoke as one fully conscious of his right to appoint him a place in his Father's kingdom, and of his ability to fulfill his promise. "*Verily*," says he, a term of assurance, "*I* say unto thee"—the word of a sovereign, whose will shall be done.

Observe, too, that the Saviour in his reply does not utter a syllable of reproach against the petitioner, nor does he even remind him of the crimes which had brought him to the cross.

No; the moment that he confesses with sincere penitence his sins, and looks with the eye of faith to his redeeming God, he becomes partaker of a free salvation, his transgressions are forgotten, his iniquities are covered. What did Christ demand from him as the condition of his being saved? Nothing, absolutely nothing, in the way of price or merit. As the poor thief saw the blood that trickled from the pierced hands and feet of the innocent sufferer expiring at his side, he recognized its power to cleanse from all sin; he saw that—

> "There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
> Lose all their guilty stains."

There, on the cross to which he was nailed, and on which he writhed in torture, was he taught to sing the anthem which he is now singing in the Paradise of God—"Oh! to grace how great a debtor!" It is by the same *free grace* alone that any of us can be saved. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy, he hath saved us." You must come as poor, lost, perishing sinners, to Him who "calls not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

But the answer of our Lord exhibits the *fullness* as well as the *freeness* of his grace. It illustrates and confirms that declaration of the Apostle: "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." The penitent thief asks only to be *remembered*, and the Saviour promises, not only that he shall not be forgotten, but that he shall be, that very day, with Himself in the world of the *glorified*. And so the experience of God's people proves that Christ is not only better to them than their fears, but better even than their prayers. When Solomon asked of God wisdom rather than long life, great riches, or victory over his enemies, he was told that he should not only get the wisdom for which he prayed, but should have beside the wealth, the honor, the length of days for which he had not prayed. So in one of the

parables of Christ, a servant arrested for debt, falls down at his lord's feet, begging for *patience* only, and obtains complete forgiveness of the debt. The prodigal son when he has "come to himself," resolves to return to his father's house, and to ask merely the position of an hired servant; but when his father sees him afar off, he runs to meet him, clasps him to his heart, and brings forth the best robes in his house to supersede the poor wanderer's miserable rags. Parental love among men does not always go this length, and the beautiful scene pictured in parable is not often realized on earth; but it does strikingly exhibit the method of God's dealing with his prodigals, who come back to Him from whom they have revolted. They ask for mercy, and they get not it alone, but they "are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And so the penitent thief is assured that he shall be that day with Jesus in Paradise.

What are we to understand by *Paradise?* Doubtless heaven, and not, as some have argued, an intermediate state. If we will allow Scripture to be its own interpreter, there can be no room for doubt as to the meaning of the Master when he spake of his heavenly kingdom under the name of Paradise. The word occurs three times in the New Testament. The first place in which it is found is our text; the second is in 2 Cor. 12 : 4, where Paul gives a grand but mysterious account of his communication with the heavenly world: "I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body I can not tell, or whether out of the body I can not tell, God knoweth) such a man caught up to *the third heaven*," that is, the highest heaven, the place of the throne of glory. "Such an one was caught up into *Paradise*." Comparing these passages together, the conclusion is unavoidable that the Third Heaven and Paradise are one and the same place. And this view seems to be confirmed by the only remaining text in which the term is used, Rev. 2 : 7: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the

Paradise of God." This is part of the message of Jesus by his servant John, to the Church of Ephesus. What Paradise can be meant, unless it be the heaven where Jesus dwells?

This view also accords with the general tenor of the word of God, which teaches us that the Christian, when he departs this life, goes to be with Christ; that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. This, then, was the happy home upon which Jesus fixes the hopes of his dying convert, so suddenly snatched from the jaws of eternal death, and so soon to enter within the gates of the eternal city. A glorious exchange! but one which all shall experience who are led to commit the keeping of their souls into Jesus' hands "as unto a faithful Creator." They shall go, without exception, to join that blessed company, who constitute the Saviour's crown and the Saviour's joy. Jesus declared to the penitent thief that he should be in *His company;* "thou shalt be *with me* in Paradise." He had promised his disciples—holding it up to them as the very complement of their bliss—that they should be "*with him, where he was.*" What richer blessing can the penitent desire? what higher promise can the Saviour give? It embraces every thing the saint can need or wish. The presence of Christ is at once the glory and the felicity of heaven. Where he is, sin and sorrow must be forever excluded. Where he is, there every conceivable source of happiness must be found, perfect in degree and endless in duration. Brethren, let us try our own anticipations of heaven, by the strength of our desires for the presence of Jesus. Let us long for heaven not only because we shall there rejoin the loved ones who died in the Lord, not only because death shall never enter those abodes of bliss, not only because we shall there find rest from all earthly toils, but also and preëminently because we shall there behold the face of Jesus, and have immediate fellowship with Him, the chief among ten thousand who is altogether lovely. Blessed is the man, who now on earth, and in the prospect of heaven can truly say: "He is all my salvation, and all my desire."

But the language of the promise to this dying penitent is: "*To-day* shalt thou be with me." That very day the glorious blessing should be his. Ere the lengthening shadows gave token of the approach of evening, or night had thrown her dark mantle over Calvary, this poor sinner, now justified and pardoned, should also be *glorified.* The word of Christ assures him of this result. And what a tide of glory must have begun to rise upon his soul as the cheering accents fell upon his ear. True, the sacred record does not inform us *how* the dying thief received the tidings, but we may well believe that to him the cross had ceased to torture, that death had lost its sting, and that even if the Roman governor had proposed to stay the execution and take him down from the crucifix, his instant reply would have been: "No, no, to depart and be with Christ is far better." He lived long enough to notice the mysterious darkness which gathered over the land, as if to shroud the awful scene; he heard those triumphant words of his expiring Lord, "It is finished," and then as a first fruit of that finished work, his redeemed spirit passed above, with Him who saved it, into the paradise of God. Well might there be joy in heaven over this monument of grace, well might angels ask in delightful wonder: "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" He who a few hours since was a hardened malefactor, is now one of the saints in light!

In conclusion, let me remind you that this history warrants no man to delay life's great work until life's last hour. Let no one infer from what has been said, that God will be especially glorified by saving him when at the last gasp, and that he may therefore continue in sin, that grace may abound. No. Remember that this instance of what may be called a death-bed repentance stands alone. As has been well said: "We have *one* instance, that none may despair; we have *but one* that none may presume." This case bears no resemblance to that of the man who, conscious of his need of repentance, deliberately postpones the duty until the approach of death renders farther delay impossible. Neither does it belong to the class of cases

(not unfrequent) in which men, after a long career of crime, have at last professed penitence, perhaps sincerely, when doomed to the scaffold. Far be it from me to deny that there may be genuine conversion in the last hours of life. Yet the general fact is, that men die as they have lived; that they die without hope, if they have lived without God. It is the extreme of folly, therefore, to reject or neglect the present overtures of grace, in the hope of a miraculous conversion at last.

The case before us was peculiar in respect both of Christ and of the thief. Jesus was now in the lowest state of his humiliation — seemingly in the power of his enemies. It pleased the Father to give the world a proof of his dignity and glory, and this poor dying thief was chosen to become the monument of his power and love. But such an occasion can not occur again. Then too we may suppose that the thief had never before heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth, or at least had never until now been brought into contact with him. What reason, then, can we have to expect peace at last, if we despise it now? On the other hand, how ample the encouragement that is here afforded to the penitent and the broken-hearted! Are there any such before me? Are there any here who have lived their life long regardless of the claim of God, who have begun to think and to ask, "What must we do" to be saved? Be not hopeless, nor faithless, but like the thief on the cross, believing. With penitential confession of your sins, make his prayer your own, and be assured that your prayer will not be turned away from God, nor his mercy from you. According to your faith it shall be unto you.

This subject teaches the absolute necessity of *casting ourselves by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.* Here are two malefactors: one of them reviles Jesus and dies; the other supplicates his mercy, relies upon his word, and lives. My hearer! believe, and *thou* shalt be saved. Oh! believe; else you too, like the impenitent thief, shall perish, in sight of the Cross, and at the very side of Jesus.

SERMON III.

DARK DISPENSATIONS KNOWN HEREAFTER.

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."—John 13 : 7.

This chapter belongs to a very interesting period of our Lord's history. His public ministry was near its close; the period of his betrayal and death was near at hand; and yet, as if forgetful entirely of his own approaching sufferings, he takes special pains to instruct and comfort his disciples. He assembles them in an upper chamber, where he institutes and celebrates with them that "Feast" which should be the permanent memorial of his dying love. "Supper being ended, Jesus knowing that the Father had given him all things, He riseth from supper, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that He poureth out water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet." (John 13 : 2, 4.) He comes to Simon Peter for this purpose, but the apostle, ashamed that his Master should perform for him so menial an office, said: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Words these, which have proved to be full of refreshment to the Church of God in all the ages since they were uttered.

By an act of singular condescension our blessed Lord taught his disciples a lesson of humility, that he is greatest of all who is servant of all. He manifests his own affection for them all, He reminds them of their need of a spiritual washing, and enforces the great duty of mutual love. It is not surprising that one who had witnessed, as Peter had, his many mighty works, the evidences that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," should expostulate as he did—"Dost *thou* wash my feet?" But Peter's objections are silenced rather than removed by the words of the text. Our Lord, does not, at first,

in any way explain the reasons of his conduct. Perhaps if he had told the disciples, at the outset, what he meant, the lessons he wished to teach them would have been much less impressive than they were. And thus is it with many of the dispensations of God towards his people; they are founded upon reasons which we do not understand, which are wisely concealed from us for a time, but in the end we have cause, with gratitude and joy, to exclaim: "He hath done all things well."

These words of our Lord Jesus Christ may be applied not only to the particular action which suggested them, but to many things that occur under his providential government. Viewed in this light, they contain a promise, that however dark the works and ways of God may seem to his people, they shall know them "hereafter," perhaps to a certain extent in the present life, but certainly and more completely in the world to come. The two clauses of the text bring before us two grand characteristics of the Present and the Future; the *Present*, with its dark mysteries, or its at best imperfect knowledge; the *Future*, with its clear light, its ample and satisfying revelations.

I. "What I do thou knowest not now." And who among us has not felt the truth of these words, and their applicability to many of the Lord's doings? Some of "the things of God" we do indeed know, some of them we might understand a great deal better than we do, if we would use the proper means, for even here where we walk by faith, we "see in part and know in part." We have God's own inspired word, to guard us on the one hand from every fatal error, and on the other, to discover to us various truths of vital importance, which man's unassisted reason never could have ascertained. And to the children of his grace he also gives the Holy Spirit to lead them into all needful truth, to open the eyes of their understanding, to take of the things of Christ, and to show them unto them. "God, who commanded the light to shine

out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth the deep things of God." All these divine provisions for the increase of our knowledge deserve our devout acknowledgment, and should be most diligently improved. At the same time, it must be owned, that there is a vast field over which ignorance casts a shadow so dark as utterly to hide it from our view, that there are designs of Providence so deep that we can not fathom them. We know indeed that God is wise, nor can we doubt his own word, which assures us that all things work together for our good and his glory; but when we look to the means and the methods he employs, and the times he selects to accomplish his purposes, we are often forced to exclaim: "Who, by searching can find out God?" We may, nay, we must acknowledge that all his doings are ordered in truth and wisdom; but when we attempt to canvass the reasons of them, or to explain their equity, we are made to feel and confess that "such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is high and we can not attain unto it." Open the Bible any where, and we shall discover confirmation of this truth.

Why, for instance, were our first parents permitted to fall? Could not God, whose restraining grace is so frequently exerted now, to keep back his people "from presumptuous sin," have kept them from falling? If it be said that they were allowed to sin, in order that the purpose of God might stand, to make a more illustrious display of his grace than could be given to sinless man, the question is hardly answered. Or shall we conclude that the entrance of sin into our world was an absolutely necessary condition of the display of grace? We dare not affirm this. We can only say in the words of our Lord, What God does "we know not now, but we shall know hereafter." This, we humbly conceive, is wiser and safer than to indulge in speculations respecting "the ways of the Almighty," which at the best are the guesses of ignorance, which

often are only the utterance of folly, in either case, darkening counsel by words without knowledge.

Again, it may be asked, why did four thousand years elapse between the first promise of a Saviour, and the incarnation of the Son of God? True, we are told that he came in "the fullness of the times;" but why did not that fullness occur at an earlier date? Why was the Gospel of life and salvation propagated so slowly? Why were so many myriads allowed to live and die ignorant of its gracious provisions? Why have the efforts to spread the Glad Tidings been crowned with such limited success, that even now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, by far the largest portion of the human family are strangers to its light and power? Why are the countries in which it was first preached, and where its earliest and most glorious victories were won, again to be ranked among the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty? These are only a few of the mysteries of Providence. We know, indeed, that all things are directed by infinite rectitude and wisdom, and that the final issue will assuredly be good. The purposes and the promises of Jehovah, it may be, travel slowly to their accomplishment; but "He is faithful who hath promised, and will perform it."

Again, if we study the dealings of God with his Church or with her individual members, we shall find them to be, in the scriptural meaning of the word, mysteries. How inscrutable are the dispensations of Providence in regard to the Church! That divine society for which Jesus Christ laid down his life, which he purchased with his own blood, has been compelled to struggle for existence, has been forced by the iron hand of persecution to yield up her holiest members to death. Meanwhile her Lord forbears to manifest his power and love, and leaves his and her enemies to have their way, so that she from the depths of distress cries out, "My God hath forgotten me." Look at another phase of her history. Outwardly she enjoys a state of peace. She has spread her conquests over the vast

empire of Rome. She is admitted as an honored guest into the palace of the Cæsars, and he who sits upon the throne of the Cæsars worships at her altar. She receives the homage of the mightiest nations of the earth. But she has hardly won this vast domain, the civilized world has hardly begun to feel her quickening influence, ere the Man of Sin appears seated in the temple of God, claiming as the vicar of Christ, to be her visible and infallible Head and Lord. All Christendom accepts the blasphemous pretension of this Son of Perdition, and for the long space of twelve hundred years, he rules the nations with a rod of iron, and covers the world with a darkness deeper than that of Egypt. Who can, at present, unfold the divine philosophy of the Papacy? Who, as he reads its terrible history, is not obliged to say in the words of the text, "What thou doest I know not now"?

Then again, what strange allotments do we discover in the case of families and individuals. Here is one possessed of all that the world can give. Elevated position, ample wealth, social influence, distinguished talent are his, and all these gifts and endowments are consecrated to the service of God. The Church leans upon him as a prop and stay, but he is suddenly cut down and is seen no more. A missionary of the cross, with bold and hopeful heart, resolves to go forth to some benighted land, to publish the glad tidings of redemption; a thousand hearts bless God for raising up such a laborer to gather the precious harvest of souls; but just as he is ready to put in the sickle, just when he has made himself master of the language of the country, and in other respects has become a workman not needing to be ashamed, he is himself cut down by the scythe of death, or by the loss of health is compelled to quit the field. The child of many hopes and many prayers, grows up, giving promise that all the fondest anticipations of the parent's heart shall be fully realized, that he will be their joy and pride during their more active years, their stay and staff in the evening of life; but he is taken away while the

dew of youth is thick upon him, and those who loved him are left to go alone and sorrowing to the grave. Look at all life's separations—it is needless to enumerate them—you may and you should believe that there is wisdom in them, but you will also find mysteries which you can not solve. Among the myriads of saints before the throne, there is not one who has not had occasion to say, I was led from darkness to light, from Satan's bondage to the freedom of Christ, "from strength to strength through the valley of Baca," and at last from earth to heaven—I was led by a way which I knew not.

God does, indeed, sometimes give us a clue to his designs, a light shines upon the road occasionally, showing that it conducts us to the Lamb. We can sometimes understand what our heavenly Father is doing, enough to elicit the confession, "Before we were afflicted we went astray, but now we keep his law." Still we never cease to meet with things that are too high for us, mysteries which we can not unravel, and must therefore be content to walk in and by the faith that he will bring us to a city of habitation. "His ways are past finding out." What he does we know not now.

The humble disciple of Christ, however, will cordially acquiesce in this divine arrangement, though it dooms him to ignorance of matters which profoundly concern him, for he knows that it will be temporary, since he has the divine assurance that he "shall know hereafter." This is a most comforting and sustaining promise. God might have required us to accept his dealings as right and wise, though no explanation should ever be vouchsafed, but instead of this, his people have his own pledge that he will in due time clear up for them the mysteries of his Providence, and the apparently dark methods of his grace. Brethren, let it be our daily prayer, that we may be enabled to bring home to our own hearts this precious assurance, rejoice that "light is sown for the righteous," and lean trustingly upon our God "until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

It pleases God—let me say again—sometimes even in the present world, partially to scatter the clouds that hover round about him, and let us see some of the reasons of his conduct. In the course of life's pilgrimage we learn that there is a "needs-be" for all the afflictions that are laid upon us, that although "for the present not joyous but grievous, they nevertheless yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Subsequent providences often explain earlier ones. And the road, which in prospect seemed very dark and difficult, when we come to look back upon it, appears strangely lightsome and cheerful, so that we wonder at the dismal fears with which we entered upon it. So it was with the disciples of Jesus. The conduct of their Master was at first, no doubt, inexplicable to them all; but in the end they comprehended the beautiful lesson of fraternal lowliness and love, which it was intended to teach. Wait then quietly upon God. In due time, perhaps in this world, certainly in the next, he will clear up all that is dark in his doings. Has God taken away a brother, or a sister, a husband or a wife, or a child dearly loved? "Knowest thou not what he hath done unto thee?" Well, it may be that you have compelled him—so to speak—in this way to bring you in penitence and prayer to the mercy-seat, to teach you the vanity of earth, to make you live in view of the realities of eternity. It may be you have compelled him to take the loved one, or the lamb of your flock, and carry it to Abraham's bosom, that it may be safe from danger, and you from idolatry. In due time you shall know the reason. Let God take his own way and time to explain his own dispensations. Let the Lord the King reign, and whether he comes to you with a frowning providence, or a smiling, be it your endeavor to hearken to his voice, to obey his word, to submit to his will, and even here on earth you shall be taught to sing the anthem, which shall be heard forever in the courts above: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

II. "We shall know hereafter." The light shall break in upon the darkness at last. In heaven, all that is now mysterious to us shall be explained, to our perfect and eternal joy. And what if we are obliged to wait until then? It is but for a moment. Soon will the day of mourning and perplexity be ended, and the day of triumph and of knowledge arrive. Then shall the assembled universe behold and own the equity, the wisdom, and the love of God in all his doings to the children of men. Standing on the mount of the Lord, we shall survey the finished plans of Providence and Redemption, and find infinite reason to admire and magnify the wisdom and the goodness that have distinguished both.

The saints in glory, for example, shall see how the scheme of Providence in its development from age to age, connected itself with the revolutions of empires, the conquests of war, the discoveries of science, as well as with the most minute and delicate affairs of private and individual life. They shall not only see how men were conducted from the cradle to the grave, but understand why each step was taken in the eventful journey; they shall then see the reasons for the alternations of prosperity and adversity, why God gave, and why he took away; they shall then learn that good and evil, friendship and bereavement, joy and sorrow, all worked for the same end; like the billows of the ocean they all rolled in the same direction, and all helped to bring the believers back into the haven of eternal rest. The family whose members are joined together by the bond of grace, shall embrace each other in the mansions of glory. Pastor and people separated in the Church militant, shall be reünited in the Church triumphant, and there they shall comprehend why the ties were broken, whose severance so deeply wounded their hearts. They shall then know what we are now called upon to believe, (alas! with how much slowness of heart,) that "all things work together for good to them that love God." A bright morning that shall be, when every

cloud shall be dispersed, when each link in the golden chain of Providence shall be radiant in the light of eternity, and we shall see God face to face.

And so with reference to the scheme of Redemption. In it there are mysteries which may remain such forever. But God's people shall comprehend, as they can not now, the reasons for the permitted entrance of sin into our world. The history of the plan of mercy, the types, the symbols, by which for four thousand years its purposes were shadowed, and its blessings conveyed, will acquire a new beauty. They shall comprehend the mystery of Bethlehem's lowly cradle, in which the infant Redeemer was laid; of the Mount of Transfiguration, where Peter, James, and John got their first view of Jesus glorified; of Gethsemane, where an angel appeared to strengthen him as he trembling held the bitter cup; of Calvary and its cross; of Olivet, from whence the risen Saviour ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now they see in part, and know in part, and yet partial as the vision is, it is glorious and blessed, but then shall they know even as they are known. And if our present dim perceptions be so joyful, what must be the bliss when we fully understand the great mystery of godliness, when all seeming discrepancies are harmonized, every paradox is explained, every difficulty shall be removed, when we shall trace the heighths and depths of everlasting love, when the soul shall be filled with its boundless fullness? Oh! it is this, which causes, and shall forever cause, the hearts of the redeemed to beat with a joy, a rapture unknown on earth. It is this perception of the pervading excellence of all God's ways towards man, that shall lend an ever-growing melody to the harps and the anthems of heaven.

"What ye know not now ye shall know hereafter." There in the paradise of God is a tree of knowledge, among whose branches no tempter shall ever lurk, neither shall deadly fruit grow upon them. Now it is a tree of life as well as knowledge. It blooms in eternal beauty. Its roots are fed by that river of

water of life which flows from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb. Oh! then will you not turn from the sorrows, the vanities, the unsatisfying enjoyments of earth, and lay hold of eternal life? Why choose for your portion a world dark and dying, when God has revealed and presses you to enter one of perfect knowledge, one of which the Lamb is the light? Jesus is the way to it, come to him now, and he will even here give you a light to cheer amid the most distressing and darkest of earth's dispensations, a light in your own souls, which, like the morning dawn, shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect and endless day.

A word of improvement.

1. Let us learn to form humble and reverential conceptions of God's doings. There is much within our present sphere of observation, which we can not comprehend. Can we by searching find out God? No. What he does we know not now. In the world to come we shall walk by *sight*, but here we must walk by *faith*. It becomes us not to rebel against this arrangement of Providence, nor to regret the revealed methods of Redemption, because we do not understand them. The Lord is holy in all his ways and righteous in all his works. Clouds and darkness are round about him, but justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. If you are a child of his grace, do not doubt that God is leading you by the best way to heaven.

2. Let us cultivate a patient submission in reference to all the divine appointments. It is our duty, and I am sure it would be our happiness to leave ourselves in the hand of Him, to do with us just what seemeth good in his sight. This we Christians profess to do. We pray, "Thy will be done," but do we not too often act, as if we meant it only so far as the will of God harmonizes with our own? Do we never rebel nor repine? When we can see clearly the design of God in the dispensations of his providence, we find it easy to confide in him, but when we can not see his immediate purpose, *that* is the time to

test our faith, our patience, our submission. God is equally wise and good when we understand his ways, and when we do not. Let it be enough for us to be assured that the Lord knoweth how to deliver his people. Let us remember that our Redeemer, who laid down his life for us, had said: "What ye know not now ye shall know hereafter."

3. Live in preparation for the world of perfect knowledge. Into it you can not enter, unless you have a title to it, and a meetness for it. Have you, under a sense of your lost condition, been brought to the cross of Christ? Are you walking in the way of obedience, judging that if One died for all, then were all dead, and that they who live, should henceforth live not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them? This is the way to heaven, and if you walk not in this path, you will never enter that glorious state of which I have spoken. You shall never see the King in his beauty, nor the goodly land beyond Jordan. You may have loved ones in heaven, seeing as they are seen, and knowing as they are known, but you shall never join their company. Look to Jesus. Trust him for life with all its trials, for eternity with all its interests and rewards. He who graciously condescended to wash his disciples' feet, waits to wash you in his atoning blood. Go to him, and light will be shed on all the past, and hope shall nerve thy soul for all the future. Clouds may continue to gather, trials may come thick and fast, but amid them all you shall, as a child of his grace, be enabled to say: "The Lord reigneth. What I know not now I shall know hereafter."

SERMON IV.

THE LAW MAGNIFIED.

"He will magnify the law and make it honorable."—Isa. 42 : 21.

So spake the prophet Isaiah, moved by the Holy Ghost. But of whom did he speak? Of himself or of some other man? Doubtless of some other, and that other was Jesus of Nazareth, that same Jesus whom Philip, taking his text from another part of this same prophecy, preached unto the man of Ethiopia. We may sometimes be in doubt respecting the meaning and application of particular Old Testament predictions, but we can be in none when Scripture itself explains and applies them, "for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." When, therefore, the New Testament writers introduce their quotations with the formula, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," we are left in no uncertainty as to the real sense of the prophecy. Possibly the prophet who wrote the words did not understand their meaning, but it is plain to us who walk in the clearer light of that new dispensation, which has made plain so many glorious mysteries of the former.

That this whole chapter refers to our Lord Jesus Christ will be seen by turning to Matthew 12 : 17. After describing some of Christ's mighty works, the evangelist adds: "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Esaias, saying, Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom my soul is well pleased." At the baptism of Jesus, and again on the Mount of Transfiguration, a voice was heard from the excellent glory, uttering almost the very same words in testimony of his divine mission and Messiahship. And when Jesus, in the power of the Spirit returned into Gal-

ilee, and coming to Nazareth, entered the synagogue, and having read as part of the Scripture for the day, a passage from Isaiah, he closed the book and said: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me," etc. There can then be no doubt that our Lord Jesus is the person concerning whom it is said: "He shall magnify the law." In the consideration of these words, I propose to inquire,

I. *What law is here referred to?*

Law, in general, is a rule of action. The law of God, which is summarily contained in the decalogue, is called the moral law, because it is designed to regulate not merely ceremonial observances, but moral action, and also to distinguish it from positive laws, which are only of temporary obligation. To this latter class belonged those ceremonial laws which prescribed the ritual of worship under the old economy, and the judicial laws which regulated the civil and political affairs of the Jews. These laws were abrogated, when the types embodied in them were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and when the Jews ceased to exist as a nation. But the moral law having no reference to time, place, or people, and being founded in the relations of man to God and to his fellow-man, is of universal and perpetual obligation.

A question has been started, whether the moral law originated in the will of God alone, or in the nature of things. Some contend that it is based solely upon the will of God, that the duties it enjoins are binding only because he has commanded them. But this view of the subject confounds justice and power; it supposes that there is no essential distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil. Trace this notion to its consequences, and it will follow that falsehood might have been a virtue and truth a vice; that it might have been our duty to cheat, murder, live without prayer, and worship the creature more than the Creator. In fine, it would follow

that there is no such thing as an eternal and immutable morality. We maintain that things are just not because God has commanded them, but that he has commanded them because they are just. There is a reason for the law in the nature of things, and this is enforced by divine authority.

There may be some precepts in the decalogue to which this remark does not strictly apply; but of moral law, properly so called, it is true. Now this law is summed up in these two commands, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and we can not conceive of an intelligent creature who is unable to perceive the perfect reasonableness and rightness of these precepts. This *is law*, and God has enforced *it* by his authority. It was proclaimed from Sinai amid thunders and lightnings, it was written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, and a curse was denounced against all who should not continue in all things to do them. Now it was this moral law, emanating from the holiness of God, and which is of perpetual and universal obligation, that Christ came to fulfill. Man had failed to meet its requirements, and Christ came to work out for him the righteousness which the law demands, and by so doing magnified it.

II. *What is it to magnify the law and make it honorable?*

To magnify, may mean to show forth one's greatness and glory, or to advance his reputation and establish his authority. In this connection, it does not signify, as Socinians affirm, that Christ came to correct and perfect the moral law. Denying as they do, what the Christian Church has ever held, that Christ came into the world to expiate for human guilt, it is necessary that they should find something for him to do worthy of the expectations which his advent had excited, and of the vast preparations which heralded his appearance upon earth. Hence they attempt to show that the moral code given to the Jews was imperfect, and that the design of the mission of Jesus

was to supplement its defects, and to give to men a clear and full exposition of their duty to God and to each other. This affirmation only shows the miserable shifts to which those who deny the atonement of Christ are compelled to resort, in order to maintain their position. We assert, on the contrary, that the "law of the Lord is perfect;" that Christ came neither to destroy, nor to correct, but to fulfill the law; and that all the duties enjoined by him, which seem to be new commands, may be referred to one or other of those two eternal principles of love to God and love to man. That law which is the expression of the divine perfections is incapable of improvement, for it is as immutable as the Lawgiver himself.

To magnify the law and make it honorable, then, is to do something, by which all created intelligences shall be profoundly convinced of the glorious character of the law; something which shall exhibit in the clearest light, its unbending authority, its pervading excellence, its perfect goodness, its awful sanctions—something, which, while it illustrates the demands of the law in all their extent and exactness, shall at the same time show forth the infinite wisdom and boundless love of the Lawgiver. This is what is meant by magnifying the law, and all this was done by our Surety when he was made under the law and became "obedient unto death." If sin had never entered the universe, there could never have been any question concerning the excellence of the law of God. No creature could ever have had even a shade of doubt in regard to the rectitude, or the wisdom, or the benevolence of any one of its precepts. Every jot and tittle of it would have met the instant and hearty approval of men, had they retained their original holiness. It harmonized perfectly with the reciprocal relations of the Creator and the creature. Such is the intimate connection between holiness and happiness, and such the framework of man's nature, that the penalty which the law denounces against transgression would immediately and neces-

sarily begin to be inflicted. Sin is repugnant to God's nature, and to man's also, since he was made in the image of God. And therefore the sinner must be miserable; a stranger to holiness, he is, by a moral necessity, a stranger to happiness.

Now there are two ways in which the law given to man may be magnified. One is by the sinless obedience of the creature—such an obedience as shall show the perfect harmony between the provisions of the law and the nature and condition of its subjects, or in other words, that the law is holy, just, and good. The other is by the infliction of its penalty when incurred, thus revealing the inflexible justice of its Author, that he is of purer eyes than to behold evil. In either case the law is magnified. Men impose upon themselves when they talk of justice punishing or not as it pleases. Such an alternative is at war with every proper idea of justice. That would not be justice, but arbitrary will, exhibiting itself, now in acts of clemency, and then in acts of severity, but without rule or reason. How could law be magnified in such a state of things? No. The wages of sin is death. Sin must be punished. It can not be pardoned without such an adequate atonement on the sinner's behalf, as should magnify the law he had broken, and make it honorable.

Such are the principles upon which the scheme devised by Infinite Wisdom for the redemption of sinful man, proceeds. It displays the grandeur of God's law as well as the infinitude of God's love. Christ is set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood for the remission of sin, declaring thus the righteousness of God. His justice was displayed in this transaction equally with his grace. The law was not repealed, but established. Its terms were not lowered, but maintained to the last iota. The salvation of the saved, so far as they are concerned, is all of free, unmerited, absolute grace, though as it respects the Saviour, it is the award of justice—the fruit of the travail of his soul, the purchase of his blood. And thus

is the law magnified and made honorable in the view of the universe as the eternal rule of right. But let us consider more particularly—

III. *How has Christ magnified the law?*

1. He magnified it by his teaching. He came to redeem those who were under its curse, but not by modifying the demands of the law, not by substituting a lower code which should accept sincere, in the room of perfect obedience. No. He too well understood the nature of the law; and hence he said by the mouth of the Psalmist, long before his advent: "Thy law is within my heart, I have preached righteousness in the great congregation." (Ps. 40 : 8, 9.) Accordingly, at the outset of his public ministry, he declared: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." He came to redeem man from the penalty of the broken law, not by setting it aside, but by enduring it himself. Even when tasting the bitterness of the curse, he recognized and loved the spotless holiness which required its infliction. When he opened the prison-door, and set the captive free, each one went forth with new and deep impressions of the majesty and excellence of the holy law of God, taught by the Saviour to say: "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way." Read the wonderful Sermon on the Mount, ponder every utterance of Him who spake as never man spake, and you will find the amplest and most convincing evidence that in all his teaching our blessed Lord magnified the law and made it honorable.

2. He magnified it in his life. Compare the law of God and the life of Christ during his abode among men, and you will find the most exact conformity of the one to the other. He was watched by a thousand jealous eyes; his actions and his words were open to the inspection of foe and friend; yet he could give, as he did, the bold challenge to a hostile multi-

tude: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" Not one dared to respond. As he is in his mediatorial person the brightness of his Father's glory, so was his life the express image, the perfect embodiment of the divine law. He was made under it, he never wished to be free from it, he unfolded in his teaching, and exemplified in his whole conduct, how spiritual, how unchangeable, how good it is. An inspection infinitely more searching than man's, even that of the omniscient God, could detect in the life of Jesus no sin, no defect, for repeatedly was a voice heard proclaiming from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

But the law required of him something more than obedience to its precepts. Those for whom he had been made under law, were sinners, and it was necessary that their guilt should be expiated, that full satisfaction should be made by him for the dishonor they had done the law; in fine, that its threatened penalty should be endured. Here then we come in view of the great work of atonement, and are led to consider the fact that—

3. Christ magnified the law in his death. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood." Thus the law obtained from Him all that it demanded from us; its penalty was endured, its precepts obeyed.

Christ was made under the law in a twofold sense. He was subject to it as Man in virtue of his human nature, and again as Mediator, or as the substitute and surety of his people. In both respects he fulfilled it. As a Jew, "according to the flesh," he carefully observed the ceremonial law, and so shed upon it a peculiar light and glory, although it was to be done away. As a substitute, he endured the penalty to which he was bound over, "suffering the just for the unjust," and though "he knew no sin, was made sin for us: was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." And thus, while

believers are not saved by the law, their salvation presupposes that all its demands have been fully satisfied. The law is not repealed, much less dishonored, but wonderfully magnified. When God determined to redeem guilty men, his own Son is sent into the world to bleed and die; Immanuel is exhibited to the whole universe as suffering under the curse. How impressive the proof thus given of the awful sanctity of God's law, when our Divine Surety bowed his head to the sword of avenging justice, and died that we might live! The thunders of Sinai seem but the gentle breathings of the wind, when compared with the tempest of wrath which overtook the sinner's substitute on Calvary. Who that looks upon "the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of glory died," can hope for impunity in sin? The believer in Jesus loves, and ever aims to obey that law, even while rejoicing in his deliverance from it as a covenant of works, and knowing that salvation comes to him as the free gift of God.

And this leads me to observe, that the law is magnified and made honorable by Christ, inasmuch as all those whom he justifies, he sanctifies. We are redeemed from the law as a covenant, from its curse, but not from its obligation as a rule of life. He delivers us that he may purify us unto Himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. All Christ's pardoned ones are saints in every sense of the word, saved from the bondage of sin, and the power of Satan. Regenerated by his grace, a new life is implanted in their souls, and they are thus enabled to run in the way of God's commandments. When a poor sinner hears the voice of God saying, "Do this and live; cursed is every one who continues not in all things written in the law to do them," he may make a vigorous attempt at obedience, but he soon sinks under a feeling of utter helplessness, until he learns how God can be just and yet justify him. When he beholds the atonement of the Mediator interposing between him and the penalty, that which before had excited only dark despair becomes an object of hearty affection, so

that he can say: "Oh! how I love thy law." The breath of a new spirit animates his obedience, and experiencing the difference between the service of a lawgiver and that of a reconciled Father, he is charmed into confidence and gratitude. He obeys not so much by the force of a law from without, as from the impulse of love within. Let sinners think what they please about the law of God, his people love it, rejoice in it, see a divine excellence in it, and desire to embody its precepts in their daily conduct. Called they are indeed to liberty, but it is the liberty from sin, liberty to serve, obey, honor Him who hath called them to glory and virtue, who makes his people fruitful in every good word and work. To conclude—

1. We see in this subject the great work of Redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take from the Bible the many passages which are in harmony with the text, which teach the doctrine of atonement, and I do not see how the law can be magnified, or how mercy and truth can come together. Redemption alone explains the sufferings of Christ, for suffering presupposes as its cause guilt inherent or imputed. We can not conceive that a benevolent being would subject innocence to pain in the mere exercise of sovereign power. Yet here we see One perfectly free from sin or impurity—one whose holy, spotless life Heaven itself attested—spending his days from the cradle to the cross under such circumstances as to entitle him emphatically to be styled the Man of Sorrows. On the common principles of reason it is impossible to reconcile the facts of Jesus' life with the justice of God. Revelation clears up the mystery, for it tells us that, holy and harmless himself, he was a willing victim to divine justice, enduring in his own person the penalty of a broken law, that he might magnify it, while the sinner who had broken it might obtain pardon and peace.

2. We see how unalterable are the claims of the law. If there be a truth established by facts, in the view of the universe, it is, that the sanctions of the law must be enforced.

Whatever tends to honor the law, tends to establish its authority. The atonement for human guilt made by the life and death of our Lord Jesus puts a higher honor upon the law of God than would have resulted from the everlasting destruction of every child of Adam. For by this it appears that God has so much regard to the law, that when His dearly beloved Son interposed in behalf of sinners who had broken it, rather than make the least abatement of its claims, the wine-cup of his wrath is poured out without mixture or mercy even upon Him. "If such things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If God so dealt with the Son of his love, when He found in him only sin imputed, what shall he do with those in whom sin reigns?

God's law shall be magnified. Why do I sound this truth in your ears? That I may stir you up to greater diligence in seeking salvation by the works of the law? No. But that by showing you the danger and utter hopelessness of all who are under this covenant, I may rouse you to flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. That law must be executed either in you or your surety. Make Christ yours by faith; believe in his name; trust in his merits; take refuge in his atonement; and, like those on whose door-posts was found the blood of sprinkling on the night when the destroying angel passed through the land, you shall be safe—safe in life, in death, in judgment; safe, because accepted in the Beloved. Lay hold then of the propitiation of Him who died, the just for the unjust, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him. But having succeeded in obtaining "the end of the law," labor to obtain "the end of the commandment—charity out of a pure heart." Human virtue has ceased to be the price of heaven, but yet it is an indispensable preparation for heaven; it is not the me-

ritorious cause, as many suppose, yet it is the wedding garment, without which there can be no admission to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. To be meet in *law*, you must be invested with the graces of a personal righteousness. Heaven is indeed purchased for us, yet we must be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

SERMON V.

THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—Acts 7 : 59, 60.

There is no finer subject of study than the character of the first Christians, especially of those chosen by our Lord to be the heralds of his grace. We see in these men the living power of the truth in Jesus, the transforming energy of the Gospel, epistles of Christ which all could read, whose value all could appreciate. Their history, as given in the word of God, enables us to study Christian character in its variety, and in its progressive development. Among these early Christians there were wide differences of character, illustrating, on the one hand, the power of divine grace, and on the other exhibiting the influence of natural temperament, the force of habit, and of early education. Thus the Apostles were kept for a time in bondage by their old Jewish prejudices, and were slow to comprehend the meaning of events which demonstrated the liberal nature and design of the Gospel. A special vision from heaven was needed to prepare Peter for the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius. He fully believed that Messiah should be the glory of his people Israel, but he was dull of heart to perceive that he was also a light to lighten the Gentiles. Some others, again, appear to have had little of this Jewish exclusiveness, and who had a deeper insight into the nature of the Gospel, as a gracious scheme embracing all the nations of the earth. And to this class belonged, I think, the first Christian martyr, the circumstances of whose death are related in the chapter from which the text is taken. In the sequel of this

discourse I shall ask your attention to the character of Stephen, to the occasion, and to the manner of his death.

I. His name—Stephen—

Would lead us to conclude that he was by birth a Greek, or a foreign Jew. He is first brought to our notice in the preceding chapter, where we read that there "arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." The "Grecians" were either Greek proselytes, or more probably Jews who, having lived in Greek colonies, had become accustomed to the use of the Greek tongue. Their complaints brought the Apostles, at whose feet the gifts and charities of the Church had been laid, to the conclusion that it was not "meet that they should leave the word of God to serve tables." Accordingly, the brethren are told to "look out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom they (the Apostles) might appoint over this business." Such was the origin of the office of deacon. And it is worthy of note that "the Seven," as their names show, were chosen from among the Grecians.

One of these seven was Stephen, of whom it is specially noted that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Afterwards, we read that "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." He was, in a word, distinguished for his graces and his gifts. Like many others, he might have exercised both these, in a quiet way, and at the end of his days have gone down peacefully to the grave. But the piety of Stephen was of that deep, diffusive, earnest sort, which is ever seeking to bring others into the blessed fellowship of its happiness and hopes. He was thus—probably not very long after his ordination to the diaconate—brought into conflict with certain zealous disputants of the synagogue of the Libertines. And as they could not resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake, though they

still resisted the claims of Stephen's Lord, their embittered malignity and envy speedily prepared the way for him to win and wear the proto-martyr's crown. Foiled in argument, they sought victory by a method in which they have had many imitators, namely, by thrusting the advocate of truth into the silence of the sepulchre. False witnesses are suborned to testify that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses, and the law, and the temple. This brings me to notice,

II. The occasion of Stephen's death.

He is summoned to appear before the Sanhedrim, accused of a crime whose penalty was death. The witnesses suborned to prove the charge, are described as *false;* but this probably means only that they had distorted Stephen's words respecting the law and the temple, as had been done by others in the case of Christ. We may, I think, infer this from his own defense. In this remarkable discourse Stephen appears much more intent upon unfolding the truth in Jesus as it had lain hidden beneath the course of Old Testament history, than eager to vindicate his own words, or to deliver himself from the hands of the Jews. Not that he was indifferent to his own fate. But he doubtless remembered those words of his Master: "When ye are delivered up to councils, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. Fear not them who have power only to kill the body." With these words ringing in his ears, how could he be afraid?

He appears before his judges; the witnesses give in their testimony; the grim smile of the accusers betokens how sure they are that their victim can not escape. In that crowded court, Stephen, the defenseless follower of Jesus, looks in vain for one friendly face; on every hand he encounters furious glances or cold indifference. But is he terrified? No. Like some rock of ocean which lifts its summit into the calm sunshine while angry billows toss and dash against its base, so Stephen stood. The Sun of Righteousness beamed upon him,

and while the storm of passion raged around him, he himself was bathed in the very light of heaven, so that even his enemies beheld his face shining like an angel's? His Divine Master was with him, and gave such visible attestation of his presence, as at once nerved Stephen's heart and warned those plotting his death to beware how they touched with their rude hands the Lord's anointed. "All that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been that of an angel."

What was this angelic appearance? Was it the mere expression of conscious innocence, the shining forth of inward peace? Was it the flush of anticipated victory? Was the description, as some have said, simply a rhetorical flourish of the historian? By no means. It was, just what the narrative suggests, a supernatural irradiation of the countenance of the proto-martyr by the Holy Spirit who was at the same time filling his soul with unspeakable joy. It was not so much Stephen as Christianity that was now on trial, and therefore it was time for Christ himself to work in support of his own cause. The doctrine of Christ preached by Stephen was accused of being antagonistic to that of Moses, and as if to give at the very outset of the trial a visible proof of the falsity of the accusations, God causes the face of his faithful and imperilled servant to shine as Moses' had done when he came down from the mount of God. What effect was produced upon the members of the council we are not told, but from the sequel of Stephen's defense it is evident that however much astounded by the spectacle, they were no way moved from their purpose. In reply to their question, "Are these things so?" Stephen proceeds to deliver the admirable discourse recorded in this chapter. Let us mark some of its prominent points.

As before observed, it is worthy of note that Stephen does not speak of himself, but rather seems to deal with some vital

question involved in the particular charge brought against him, namely, that he had blasphemed Moses, and the temple, and the law. He had probably asserted in his discussions with the Libertines and others, that the shadows of the old economy would disappear, since their Substance had come; that the rites and ceremonies of Moses would give place to a simpler and more spiritual liturgy, now that the promised Messiah had come into the world; that not in Jerusalem alone, and in her temple, acceptable worship should be offered to the Father, but that in every place incense might be presented to him. For these declarations he had ample warrant in the prophetic Scriptures.

"Men, brethren, and fathers! hearken unto me," said he, and then he calmly proceeds to prove by a summary of Old Testament history, that there was no blasphemy in saying it was to be done away. He shows that Abraham, called from amidst a nation of idolaters, had enjoyed friendship and fellowship with God, long before the law was given. He shows how Moses himself had been rejected by the people whom, under God, he had saved from Egyptian bondage, and how he had predicted the appearance of a prophet like him, and yet far greater, whom they should hear. He shows that the temple was standing in all its ancient glory; Jehovah himself had asked by the mouth of his prophet, (Isa. 66 : 1,) "What house will ye build me?" "Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool." At this point his historical argument abruptly stops. What he says of the temple would seem to show that his purpose was to prove the typical, and, therefore, temporary character of the sacred edifice, that hence there was no blasphemy in predicting its destruction, as by the incarnation and death of Messiah, the end of its erection had been accomplished.

His angry judges were quick to discern, as the argument advanced, the conclusion to which it led them; their flashing eyes, their gnashing teeth, revealed the paroxysm of rage into

L. of C.

which they were thrown, and the uselessness of reasoning with men resolved to shut their eyes and ears. Stephen suddenly changes the strain of his address, and prompted by the Holy Spirit, he with the majestic air and tone of an ancient prophet, denounces their guilt, their obstinate impenitence and their awful doom: "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so also do ye." Now the measure of their national sin was filled up by their betrayal and murdering of the Just One. It ill became such a people to trust in their own righteousness; and as if to awaken them to this truth, he gives another thrust to their consciences, by reminding them of the law of which they boasted, but which they had not kept.

When they heard these things, they were "cut to the heart." The word rendered "cut," is different from the term elsewhere used to denote the effect of the preaching of the Gospel, and rendered, Acts 2 : 37, "pricked to the heart." Here the word used, literally means to saw asunder. The figure is most striking, and describes in the strongest manner the effect of this address, how it grated upon their hearts, like the passing of a jagged saw over tender flesh, filling them with an agony of rage, and lashing them into fury. At the opening of the defense, these judges saw the face of Stephen as it had been the face of an angel; and now at the close, though a heavenly sweetness and serenity still irradiated the countenance of the martyr, he saw their faces as they had been the faces of so many demons. This brings us to,

III. His martyrdom.

Stephen had witnessed a good confession, he had kept the faith, and now, while a furious tempest is raging around him, he is himself kept in perfect peace. Standing upon the very verge of eternity, and with the prospect of a cruel death, he is not dismayed. He knew for whose Name's sake he had been summoned before the council; he knew in whom he had be-

lieved, and now, with the calm dignity which religion inspires, he turns away from the angry mob before him, and lifting his eyes upward, looks steadfastly toward heaven. The act was expressive of resignation and of hope. And as Stephen's upward gaze became more fixed and steadfast, we may well believe that his angelic countenance grew more radiant with the light and glory of the opening heavens. How transporting the prospect that burst upon him! He had walked by faith; but now, he stands and sees the glory of God. This was the first martyrdom for the name of Jesus, and a special honor is put upon the sad and yet sacred scene. And He who himself, through death, destroyed him who had the power of it, the devil, gives a visible proof that all his faithful martyrs conquer though they die.

Stephen—probably in ecstatic vision—beholds the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He saw not God himself, who is invisible, but his glory, that is, some special display of it, some symbol of the divine presence, perhaps like that which Isaiah beheld, a surpassing splendor in presence of which the bright seraphim did veil their faces. He saw Jesus. He recognized him amid the shining hosts of heaven. Perhaps his eyes had never before rested upon the human form of Jesus, but he could say, "Whom having not seen I love," and now he instantly identifies his beloved and his friend. He saw Jesus *standing* at the right hand of God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul contrasting the Levitical priesthood with that of Christ, says: "They *stood*, daily ministering, but Christ, after his one sacrifice, forever *sat down*." (Heb. 10 : 11, 12.) But in this scene he appears *standing*, as if he had arisen from his throne to encourage and support his faithful martyr; *standing* as if to receive his ransomed soul, and introduce it into the presence of his Father; *standing*, as if he would be the first to hail the triumph of the dying yet victorious saint, and with his own hands would place upon his

brow the crown of eternal life. Blessed vision! he knows that he is not alone. The Master is with him, and, nerved by his presence, he could defy a thousand deaths. Nay, he is as really beyond the reach of its sting as was Elijah when borne to heaven in a chariot of fire.

"Behold, I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." He saw Jesus in human form glorified, retaining, therefore, all his human sympathies. The words were a confession to all around him that he was not a martyr to an opinion, but to a most certain and blessed fact. "I *see* Jesus."

His maddened enemies can bear no more. They cry out with fury to drown the martyr's voice; they shut their ears, lest they should hear one more dying word; they run upon him with one accord, and overwhelm him with stones. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The word *God* is not in the original, text, and the verse would be better rendered thus: "They stoned Stephen, who prayed saying, or making invocations, and saying, Lord Jesus," etc. Nothing can be plainer than that Stephen addressed his prayers to the Lord Jesus, and thus in his dying moments he gave a most solemn attestation to the vital doctrine of the supreme divinity of Christ. Standing as Stephen then was on the brink of eternity, he honors the Son even as he honored the Father. There is no stronger expression of faith, and no more solemn act of worship than to say as did the holy martyr: "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." Yet such was Stephen's prayer. He addressed to Christ the very same petition which Christ himself on the cross offered to his Father. It was a petition which Divinity only could answer, it was a deposit of priceless worth which could be safely intrusted only into the hands of the Almighty.

But there was still another prayer which ascended from the martyr's heart and lips. "Kneeling down, he prayed saying,

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." "Who can forgive sin but God only?" The argument for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ involved in this fact is unanswerable. The miserable attempts that have been made to evade its force, only serve to show how impregnable is that fundamental doctrine of our faith. Stephen knew that the guilt of his persecutors and murderers was fearful; he intercedes for them, nor does he plead in vain. Among that raging mob was one whose countenance was lighted up by a lurid smile of satisfied vengeance as he gazed upon the mangled and lifeless body of the martyr—one who became notorious as a persecutor of the Church, making havoc of it, haling men and women to prison—the "young man named Saul," at whose feet were laid the garments of those who stoned Stephen. Can we doubt that the conversion of Saul, the persecutor and blasphemer, into Paul the Apostle, was an answer to the dying prayers of the protomartyr?

"And when he had said this, *he fell asleep*." Mark, it is not said he *died*, but he fell *asleep*. Surrendering his body to the earth, and committing his soul to Christ in the exercise of a living faith, he becomes, if I may say so, free even from himself. His work is done. He is ready for rest. He has no fear of those who can kill the body. He breathes forth the melting prayer of love, which should have subdued even his blood-thirsty foes, and then falls asleep. Beautiful description of the death of God's dear children. Whether like Stephen they are called to die in the open field upon a stony bed, or in their own home surrounded by every thing that ministers comfort or mitigates suffering, it is *a falling asleep*, a pillowing their aching heads on the arm of an Almighty Saviour. Sleep on, blessed martyr, till that last morning of time arrives, when the voice of Him whom thou sawest standing at the right hand of God shall awake thee in the first resurrection, and bring thee in soul and body perfect in his image to share the glories of eternity.

This history contains many important lessons, some of which have been noticed in passing. Let me, in conclusion observe, that we have here a striking illustration of the supports which the Saviour vouchsafes to all his faithful servants. The grace that enabled Stephen to discharge his duties in life, fitted him for his last solemn testimony, his final and fearful trial. He who was his support in life, strengthened him in death; and that too, a death most inhuman and horrible. The light of heaven's glory shone upon his face; the opening firmament revealed to his enraptured vision his living Lord ready to receive him. His was not a solitary case. A multitude of the noble army of martyrs have triumphed over death, have been so sustained amid cruel tortures as to astonish the beholders—have rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. How many, too, who pining through long weeks, or months, or years of sickness, have felt the same comforting presence; how many who have endured a martyrdom of bodily pain through many a long year, at last, full of faith in the love and faithfulness of God, have fallen asleep in Jesus! The dark valley has opened before them, but they have not been left to enter it alone. The Good Shepherd has been at their side with rod and staff. Bright forms have beckoned them onward, and sweet voices have whispered their assuring "Fear not." Many who are resting their hopes of eternal life on the true basis, are yet distressed, greatly distressed, at the thoughts of dissolution. Away with all such fears! He lives who is our life. I can not tell you what extraordinary supports God gives to dying believers, but I can tell you I have seen enough in the experience of dying saints, to make me believe that He is faithful who has said: "As thy day is so shall thy strength be."

Live lives of faith in the Son of God, and you shall not be permitted to die in darkness. Let your daily life bear testimony for God, and at your death God will bear to you a testimony of the goodly land to which you are going. There is

an expression used of Stephen, which explains the calmness and fortitude with which he met this terrible ordeal. He is described as being "full of the Holy Ghost." When first brought to our notice, it is as a man "full of faith;" and again, when his hour had come, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up," etc. Here was the secret of his strength. He had yielded himself to the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and now when the trial came, the Comforter was with him. There is no other way for us to prepare to meet death, but by submitting to be taught and led by the Holy Spirit. Live day by day as those in whom he dwells, discharging the duties of the day; thus shall you be better fitted for your Lord's coming than by any special acts of preparation for death. We can not promise you after fighting the good fight of faith, such glorious things as cheered the eyes of the protomartyr, but we can assure you on the unfailing authority of God's word, that they who put their trust in him shall never be confounded, that at eventide it shall be light; that if you are faithful unto death, you shall have a crown of life. You know not when, nor where, nor how you shall be called to yield up your spirit. Be like Stephen, filled with the Spirit, and you too shall see heaven opened, and when you sink into your last slumber, you too shall fall asleep in Jesus.

SERMON VI.

THE LIFE TO COME.

"The life which is to come."—1 Tim. 4 : 8.

Man is endowed with two natures, a physical and moral, and he belongs to two worlds, the world that now is, and that which is to come. While keenly active in pursuing what are usually termed his temporal concerns, he is obstinately obtuse and careless in regard to his higher and more enduring spiritual interests. To correct this evil, we must endeavor to impress him with the surpassing grandeur and importance of spiritual things, and to show him that a just estimate of these is essentially necessary to secure his temporal welfare, while the neglect of them exposes him to a dreadful penalty, from which it should be the object of his first and most anxious effort to escape, even the wrath to come. The word of God illustrates and enforces these momentous truths, and the great business of the Gospel ministry is to ply the hearts and consciences of men with them, that they may be reclaimed from error, and induced to lay hold of eternal life.

Such is the clear import of the passage from which the text is taken. The Apostle instructs Timothy, "his own son in the faith," how he might become a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine. He exhorts him to cultivate himself, and to recommend to others the exercise of godliness, which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, *and that which is to come.* This, he adds, is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. "These things command and teach, assured that by so doing thou [Timothy] shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

I purpose, this morning, to direct your attention to that future state of existence, to which the Gospel promise refers, in which the results of men's conduct shall be fully developed, and their character, whether it be good or ill, shall be consummated. I do not deem it necessary to enter at large into the proofs that there is a future life. Suffice it to say, that evidences of this vital truth may be found outside of Scripture, in the common belief of mankind, in the aspirations and longings of the soul after immortality, in the operations of conscience. These are witnesses for the life to come, the force of whose testimony even the most determined skeptic can not wholly evade or resist.

Passing from this topic, I proceed to consider the distinguishing characteristics of the future life. Correct and definite views on this subject are of the utmost importance. We may admit the *general* fact that there is such a life, and yet fall into great and fatal mistakes respecting its nature. The Pagan, the Mohammedan, the false religionist of every name, accept the fact of immortality; they believe that there is another life, but their ideas of it are widely different from the teaching of the word of God. And as men's notions of the life which is to come, necessarily exert an influence upon their conduct in the life which now is, it concerns us rightly to apprehend the lessons of Scripture on this point, that our present duties may be discharged in such manner as to secure our future and eternal interests. I observe then,

1. That the life to come will embrace the whole of man's complex nature, his body and his soul. Both these are essential parts of the man, namely, the body, a mere material organization, subject to physical laws, and the soul, an immaterial principle to which belongs the higher functions of consciousness, thought, and will. The soul of man enters upon the life to come, immediately at death. Its faculties, so far from being injured by that event, are enlarged, expanded, quickened into intenser activity, amid the scenes which are now so mysterious to us·

Nor have we reason to think that even a momentary interval elapses between the two states of being. The last instant of the life that now is, merges into the first instant of the life which is to come. We are assured that to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord.

And in that coming life, the body shall ultimately have a share. We see it sicken, and wither, and die. We look into the vault and the sepulchre, and there see the sentence confirmed, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Age after age, and century after century may pass away, while the once beautiful and breathing framework, the dwelling of the soul, lies in silent and seemingly irreparable ruin; but a final restoration is ordained, and amid the convulsions of an expiring universe, a glorious morning shall dawn upon the long dark night of the grave. When the mighty angel shall place one foot on the land and one on the sea, and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer, then shall the dominion of death be ended, and all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Such are the declarations of the word of God, from which we learn that in the resurrection of the last day, the body, while preserving its identity, shall undergo in some mysterious mode a vast and refining change; it shall welcome again the soul to its ancient but now renovated and indestructible abode, and thus reünited shall be capable of a joy or a sorrow, of which we can now form no conception. And thus the life to come shall comprehend the whole man in his bodily and spiritual nature.

2. I observe, again, that the life to come will be one of retribution.

The future world is that in which God shall render to every man according to his works. The present life is, in one sense, probationary, and will be succeeded by another, in which men shall reap the fruit of their doings, while the sanctions of that

scheme of moral government under which they are now placed, shall then be ratified and enforced. Each soul as it enters the unseen world, meets the sentence that shall fix its destiny; but on the last great day, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before the Judge, there shall be a solemn and universal assize, in which Heaven shall vindicate its procedure in the face of assembled men and angels. At the appointed time the heavens shall open, and there shall be seen descending on the clouds "that Man," who is the Judge of the world—an appointment, of which God hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead. He shall come in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels. He shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. The two classes into which the race is divided, shall then undergo a solemn scrutiny, conducted on the principles of grace and equity, and the decision of that day shall sunder them completely and perpetually, the one class entering into the eternal joy of their Lord, the other going into eternal banishment from the glory of his presence and his power.

What words can describe the bliss that shall then pervade the heavenly world through all its vast extent! It shall be a fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard it, but God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit, that heaven's countless and glorious myriads having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall serve God day and night in his temple. He who sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them; there shall be no more sorrow nor death, no more crying nor pain, for God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle nor light of the sun, for

the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.

And this same sure word of prophecy tells us of a hell, wherein men shall abide in endless darkness and perdition. There they shall feel the burning of the flame, and the gnawing of the worm that dieth not, while weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth shall be their perpetual employ. These terrible expressions denote not merely corporeal pains, but mental agonies far more intense, arising from the ceaseless working of the fierce passions of rage, remorse, and dark despair. Into one of these two worlds all the sons of Adam shall be gathered. To one or the other of them, you and I are hastening forward. Every pulsation of your heart should remind you of the rapidity with which you are hurrying onward, onward. And at no distant day, all who have ever trod the earth, will be found in heaven or in hell. O my dear hearer! let me beg you to pause, and ask yourself, Whither am I going?

3. The life to come will be eternal in duration, and unchangeable in character.

In the present world, every thing with which we are familiar, contains in itself the seeds of decay and dissolution. The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, yea, the great globe itself, which we inhabit, shall pass away. But the world to come—and this fact should awaken within us the most serious and solemn consideration—is one which admits of no change; there, all is fixed; there, the rewards bestowed, and the punishment inflicted, shall be everlasting.

As to the eternal duration of the happiness of heaven, none are disposed to doubt. What heart does not yield a cheerful and assenting response to such passages of Scripture as the following, taken in their plain and literal sense: "He that believeth hath everlasting life"—"our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, even an *eternal* weight of glory"—"knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance;" "blessed be the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." No one is disposed to pervert the obvious meaning of these words. All believe, that in these and similar texts, *everlasting* means *everlasting*, that *enduring* means *enduring*. No one, in short, is so foolish as to try to persuade himself or others, that the happiness of heaven, though described in the word of God as endless in duration, will, in fact, come to an end.

But when the dark side of the future life is the subject of discussion, how many revolt at the announcements of the divine word, though uttered in words of plainest import, and stand ready with shallowest sophistry to pervert and wrest the Scriptures? They undertake to prove that when punishment is spoken of, *everlasting* does not mean *everlasting;* that the endless hell, the unquenchable fire of the Bible, is only a sort of prolonged purgatory, the result of which shall be to restore those who are subjected to its purifying flame, to the perfection and the felicity of heaven. Thus do men wrest the Scripture to their own destruction, and so silly are they whom the devil leads captive at his will.

It may seem to some an incongruous task on the part of a minister of Christ, a preacher of the glad tidings of redeeming mercy, to undertake to prove that there is an eternity of wrath. But, would it be an act of unkindness, if I should warn a passing traveller of a pitfall in the road, which I knew to exist, and in which he might lose his life? or if I should rouse the sleeping inmates of a burning habitation? No, it were barbarous in me not to do it. And so he who loves the souls of his fellow-men, will seek, by all means, to save them from the fearful perils to which they are exposed, warning every one with the utmost plainness, and urging them with all earnestness to flee from the coming wrath. In preaching the Gospel, we must not only set forth the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe,

but with equal distinctness the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men.

Now, if you look into the New Testament, with no preconceived notions as to what it must contain, you will find the doctrine, awful as it is, of the unchangeable condition of the lost, taught by our Lord Jesus Christ, and in a manner the most plain and pointed. For instance, there is the striking parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Here the latter appears in the bosom of Abraham, the former "lifts up his eyes in hell, being in torments." The rich man's earnest appeal to Abraham, is met by the assurance that to grant it was impossible—a great and impassable gulf was between them. How clear is it that our Lord meant to teach that each of the parties in the parable was "fixed in an eternal state."

Another passage, bearing upon this point with peculiar force, is contained in Mark 9 : 43–49 : "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee ; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, *into the fire that never shall be quenched*, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend, cut it off and cast it from thee. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee ; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire." The reïteration in these verses of the terrible formula, "*their worm dieth not*," "*the fire is not quenched*," is very noticeable, and gives an awful emphasis to the lesson taught. Mark, too, the last clause, "*every one shall be salted with fire.*" What does this singular expression mean ? The sense, as many able expositors maintain, is, that as salt preserves from corruption the flesh to which it is applied, so the unquenchable fire shall render every thing cast into it as imperishable as itself; they shall be eternally consuming, yet eternally unconsumed. The whole passage is one which must make every serious man

to tremble while he reads it. And it is in unison with the spectacle which John beheld amid the prophetic visions of Patmos, of men seeking death and not finding it, men eager to die, but utterly unable to do so, because they are salted with fire.

Turn again to Matthew 25, a chapter in which with a more than usual minuteness of detail, our Lord prophetically pictures the solemn scenery of the final judgment. All nations stand at the bar, awaiting the sentence of the "Lord, the righteous Judge." The countless assembly consists of two classes —the righteous and the wicked—which are now completely separated. Each class goes to its own place, and both alike enter into a state changeless and eternal. "Come, ye blessed children of my Father," shall the King say to those on his right hand; "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" while to those on his left he says: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." The same word, denoting eternity, is used in both clauses of the last verse. Now you may search the word of God, and you will search in vain for a single passage bearing upon the future destiny of men, which does not perfectly accord with the obvious import of those to which I have adverted.

And now, brethren, I have laid before you this truly awful doctrine, that God's wrath is revealed from heaven. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, and see if it is not written on these sacred pages. Search the Scriptures in an humble and docile temper, remembering that on all such matters our proper business is not to "reason high," and argue that God must do this or that, but reverently to listen to his voice speaking in his word, and to believe what he tells us he will do; thus search the Scriptures, and you will learn that the torments of hell are as unending as the glorious felicity of heaven. He who sinks

into the abyss of woe, shall never rise. He will be an eternal monument of justice; and even while the exhaustless vials of divine wrath are poured out upon him, his own conscience will compel him to confess that he is enduring only "the righteous judgment of God."

Let us now proceed to consider the practical influence which these Scriptural views of the future life should exert upon our hearts and our daily conduct. I remark,

1. That the life which is to come should be the subject of our habitual contemplation. It has been revealed to us for this end. And who can doubt that it should be made the theme of daily meditation; that it should so engage our most serious thoughts as to beget in us an eager desire for the dawning of the eternal day, a confident and delightful anticipation of the inheritance reserved in heaven for all who are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. How exalted does man appear, as a being invested with the power of an endless life! How excellent, how noble must his nature be, seeing he is an heir of immortality! Man is not the mean and paltry creature, which a vulgar infidelity would persuade him that he is—a mere material organism, which, when the brief space of life has been run, is destined to become dust, or to sink into annihilation. No. You bear the stamp of eternity. You shall exist when all around you shall have passed away. The towering pyramid, the gorgeous palace, and all the mightiest monuments of art shall crumble. The "heaven-kissing" mountain shall waste away; the thunder of the cataract, though fed by ten thousand springs, shall be hushed; the tides of ocean shall cease to ebb and flow; the stars of heaven shall fade, and the moon, that has for ages walked in brightness, shall lose her splendor; the visible creation, like an old and worn-out garment, shall be laid aside; but this universal wreck of matter does not include man. Nay, the hour when the heaven and the earth are to be dis-

solved, shall witness man's resurrection to a new, immortal, unchanging life.

How solemn a thing is it to have such an existence, especially when we remember that it is to be an existence in heaven or in hell—an existence allied to boundless felicity, "progressing the dateless circle of eternity with joy and bliss in over measure forever;" or an existence amid the darkness of an endless midnight, in the endurance of sorrows such as earth never knew, tormented day and night with the lost forever. How awful yet how grand is such an existence! You look upon the little child which has just opened its eyes and has then closed them in death, and you ask for the purposes of its creation. The question would admit of no answer, if its career terminated in the tomb. But follow it upward to that world where John saw the *small* and the great standing before God, and where we are told their "angels do always behold the face of their Father in heaven," and can you then say they were made in vain? You look upon the face now cold in death, of one whose life was marked by toil, by anxious cares, by heavy trials, and you ask, What is there in such a life to induce a man to covet existence? But call to mind the faith which sustained the departed under all his sorrows, the hope full of glory which cheered him when his flesh fainted and failed; conjoin in your contemplation the immortal and the mortal; think not only of the "sufferings of this present time," but also of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and then I am sure you will confess that this man had ample reason to say, with one distinguished alike by his trials and his virtues: "Blessed be God that ever I was born."

Let, then, this future life be the subject of your frequent and serious contemplation. Think of it as the light of each new morning dawns upon you, and when the evening shades prevail; think of it in the house and by the way, in health and sickness, in joy and sorrow, in youth and age. Think of it as *yours*. There is no place in which the thought is not pro-

per and profitable. And while you are diligently performing your daily duties, and are occupied with the business of the life that now is, let every thing possess the peculiar tint and color which is derived from the habitual remembrance of the life which is to come.

2. The contemplation of the life to come should prompt to diligent preparation for it. This is the reason why it is revealed to us in the word of God.

And in what does the preparation consist, by which we may escape the world of woe, and secure the inheritance laid up in heaven? This is the grand point in the whole matter. What shall we do that we may inherit the life of glory? My hearer, let me assure you that for this end, the merit of penitence amounts to nothing, the merit of good works amounts to nothing. There is only one way to prepare, and this way is discovered to us in the gracious revelations of the Gospel. God, whose government we have resisted, whose law we have broken, in the riches of his love and mercy has devised a plan by which his truth, his holiness, his justice can be satisfied, while the offender is spared and accepted. His only and dearly beloved Son hath been "given" to save our guilty world. Christ died upon the cross in the sinner's room. Here God can be just, while he justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He bore our sins in his own body. But how do we obtain an interest in Christ's merits? By *believing.* He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life.

> "*Believing*, we rejoice
> To see the curse remove;
> We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
> And sing his bleeding love."

Do you ask, what is believing? It is the simple, cordial acceptance of the testimony of God; or it is to receive the

"faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." My hearers, if you feel your need, or your peril; if you are in any measure allured by the bliss and the glory of the life to come, or are alarmed by the revelation of the wrath to come, let me entreat you, now, without delay, to receive Christ Jesus the Saviour. Come to Him trusting in his merits and his righteousness. Come, confidently persuaded that they are yours in the offer of God, that you are entitled to appropriate them to yourselves, and that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ." And then, having believed, prove the reality and sincerity of your faith, by the purity and holiness of your lives. For while a true faith justifies the person, it also purifies the heart. Thus believing and thus living, the hour cometh when from the life that now is, you will be borne away to the life that is to come. And when death appears to summon you away, still looking with a simple faith to the Crucified One, you shall find that the grave has lost its victory. And he who to others is justly described as the king of terrors, to you is only the friend whom Jesus sends to call you to his arms. As you bid adieu to earth, you shall be welcomed into Christ's immediate presence. There, in the midst of the Paradise of God, you shall see the King in his beauty—him who is fairest where all are fair, and with the blood-bought multitude gathered round him, begin the songs and the services which shall never weary, though they shall never cease.

I speak to-day to a company of candidates for the life to come—to a company, some of whom may soon die, yet all of whom shall live forever. For that life, with its momentous issues, there are those before me who, I rejoice to believe, are not unprepared. You, dear friends, have heard without dismay what has been said respecting its solemn, its overpowering realities. With adoring love and gratitude, you survey the wondrous scheme by which you have obtained a title to the

inheritance of the saints in light; with joyful confidence you can, or at least you may say, "I fear no evil. I know in whom I have believed." What a blessing!

Aged Christian! thou canst not be very far from the hour when thou shalt enter upon that coming life, for which thou hast been, perhaps these many years, laboring to make thyself meet—the life of eternal glory, of perfect bliss. Every wave rolls thee nearer to the shores where thou shalt behold thy Beloved, and thy Friend, and enter into everlasting rest. Fear not. He who in days long past called you by His grace, who has kept you through all your journey hitherto, guarding you with a ceaseless love and care, will never, no, never forsake you.

And are there not some here whose consciences have been all along telling them that they are quite unfitted for the world to come, unprepared for heaven, and standing every hour in jeopardy of hell? Is there one in this house in danger of losing his soul? Who is it? Oh! let us all put to our hearts the searching question: "Lord, is it I?" Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. And if there be one who is conscious that he is in peril, let him not depart from this sanctuary, without resolving in the strength of God never to rest until he has found peace and safety in the blood of Jesus. Hear, then, that your soul may live. Hear the warning, loving, entreating voice of the Son of God: Whoso believeth in me shall not die forever, but shall have the life eternal.

SERMON VII.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

"WHATSOEVER is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 JOHN 5 : 4.

AMONG the primitive disciples of our Lord, there was none who exhibited in so eminent a degree the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit as he who leaned on the bosom of his Master. None so much as he appears to have treasured up the sayings of Jesus, or to have drank more deeply of the spirit of that Gospel, whose mission was "peace on earth and good will towards men." And yet we find this loving disciple continually referring to conflicts and adversaries, to resistance and victory, as though he had inherited Ishmael's spirit and Peter's sword.

But who are his enemies? Satan, who sinned from the beginning, and whom the Son of God was manifested to destroy; Antichrist, that confessed not that Jesus was come in the flesh; hypocrites, who said they had fellowship with Christ, while they walked in darkness; liars, who said they loved God and hated their brother; apostates, who went out from the disciples because they were not of them—in a word, the world lying in wickedness, the love of which, and conformity to which, is alike destructive of piety and peace.

Now, a man may take to himself the whole armor of God, and set himself in opposition to such enemies as these, without forfeiting his claims to the character of a man of peace and love.

Christianity is a warfare; every follower of Christ is by profession a soldier; the enemies he is engaged to combat are, the

world, the flesh, and the devil. It is of the first of these that my text more especially speaks. Mankind are led captive by it, but the Christian resists and overcomes it.

The Word of God presents a complete and consistent view of the Christian life. A view which observation of others will substantiate, and personal experience will confirm. It neither disguises the evil of things as they are, nor conceals the difficulty of making them what they should be. It describes the whole Christian life as a perpetual conflict between good and evil, the flesh and the spirit, light and darkness. It provides spiritual weapons for a warfare that is not carnal. It connects the means with the end, and represents the warfare of the Christian as a prelude and pre-requisite to the victory. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

We have then in the words before us two most interesting and important considerations. 1st. The Christian's victory. 2d. The means by which it is achieved.

1st. The Christian's victory. In the text the apostle assigns it to those who are born of God, and in the fifth verse to believers in the Lord Jesus. Both descriptions apply to the same individuals.

The Apostle observes, in the first verse, that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and it would have been equally true had he said that whosoever is born of God believeth that Jesus is the Christ. But while regeneration and faith are thus identified, a line of distinction may be usefully and properly drawn between them. The one describes our state, the other our character.

Regeneration introduces us into the new world of grace. Whosoever is born of God becomes from that moment his child, restored not only to his image, but made partaker of all his excellent blessings. While such is the Christian's state, his

distinguishing character is that of a believer in Christ. It is by faith that his regeneration has been instrumentally effected.

The special object of faith is the Son of God, the Saviour. Regeneration brings us near to the Father, because it restores to us his image. The feelings of a regenerated soul towards God are those of a child towards a father; and while the believer, as such, places his dependence in Jesus, the object of his faith, the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, depend habitually upon him as their God and Father. I repeat that I am speaking of the same individuals in different relations and different characters. Christ said: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Thus the regenerate person shows himself to be a believer in Christ, and the believer in Christ approves himself to be regenerate; and hence the terms as characterizing the child of God are convertible and of like signification.

But the moment a man becomes a subject of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, and has peace with God, he comes necessarily in conflict with Satan and the world. So long as a man is dead in corruption there is but one principle in him, even that of the flesh; but quickened by grace and born again of an incorruptible seed, there are two principles, one a natural, the other a spiritual principle; and these being contrary one to the other, there must be a conflict, but we thank God there is no doubt with respect to the issue of the contest.

The words before us do not more surely assume the fact that there is war, than they assert that there *shall be victory.* Let us look at this victory. The text asserts that whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, but says not a word of being overcome. Is the Christian never overcome of the world, or by that old nature through which the world operates? And is the fact that he is sometimes so overcome, to negative all his pretensions to piety, and to lead to the conclu-

sion that he is not a believer in Christ? By no means! Woe to us if we bring our regeneration to such a touchstone! Deep despair would seize every heart, and hope would be blotted out forever. We are sanctified but in part. There is none that doeth good and sinneth not. The declaration is to be taken in the same sense as that in ninth verse. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin!

The believer overcomes; the believer sins not inasmuch as it is his habitual aim and purpose not to sin. Sin may live in the Christian, but the Christian does not live in sin. Though not destroyed, sin is dethroned in him. He does not so sin as to denominate him a sinner, in opposition to a saint or subject of God.

That the believer can not commit an act of sin, no judicious interpreter of the word of God would venture to affirm. That would be contrary to the teaching of chap. 1 : 9, of this epistle, where it is made our duty to confess our sins, with the consequent privilege of having them forgiven. The declaration of the text is to be understood of what is habitual and not of what is occasional—of the habit, rather than of any individual act. He overcometh the world—that is, he is always at war with it, and though at times surprised, his course is that of a conqueror, of one who presses forward, pulling down one stronghold after another.

There is another idea involved, and that is, that whenever the Christian sets himself to fight the world, he is sure to overcome it. In many a surprise he is defeated, in the heat of battle never. God has given to every soldier of the cross a shield, whereby he may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and upon that shield is inscribed: "Ye shall not be tempted above that ye are able to bear." If overcome, it is because the Christian armor is not rightly put on, and we sleep on our post and parley with the tempter. But while denying that sinless perfection is ever to be attained here, do not understand us as representing the believer as

under any necessity of doing what is evil. No! God hath commanded us not only to be holy but to be perfect, and he hath given us means, in the use of which we may gain the victory ever and always.

Now here is a seeming paradox, but it is one which every child of God can readily understand. He believes that the grace of God is sufficient, and yet he knows that in many things he offends. He believes it is *impossible* for him to be overcome if taking to himself the whole armor of God, praying with all prayer, and watching thereto with all perseverance; but he believes it *possible*, because he knows that nothing short of perfection would secure the vigilance demanded. But there is such a thing as overcoming even when we fall.

> "His saints in all this glorious war,
> Shall conquer though they die."

Every repulse that reveals to us our need of increased watchfulness; every assault that exhibits the skill and strategy of our foe, and that drives to a closer alliance and a more implicit trust in the great Captain of our salvation, tends alike to the discomfiture of our foe and our more perfect security in Christ.

Now, in what do they that are born of God overcome the world? By the world we understand all that centres and terminates in this present state of being; that which is limited to time, and ventures not a thought beyond it; that which perishes in the using, and defiles and curses by the abuse thereof. We enter into no indiscriminate crusade against the good things of this life, its enjoyments and endearments. These are the gifts of God; they give elasticity to the spirit and sunshine to the soul, and we would not impair the one or overcloud the other. There is no harm in acquiring wealth or aspiring to honor, in cultivating taste or intellect, so long as these things are kept in due bounds, and in harmony with man's present and future well-being.

"The blessing Thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives—
To enjoy is to obey."

An abuse of the world is the evidence of folly, a right use of it is the evidence of faith. The evil lies not in the seeking of these things, but in making them the chief object of pursuit, in suffering them to engross and fill the heart to the exclusion of that godliness which is profitable both for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.

The world, then, is practically overcome when the heart, though conversant with these things, is not occupied and engrossed by them. When the downward, grovelling tendency of the soul is counteracted by heavenly aspirations; when we are led by each stream of mercy up to the source of all good; when every accession of good to our store is regarded as an increase of responsibility, a means of greater good and usefulness to others, and of more needed vigilance to ourselves; when amid all our present comforts we can esteem ourselves as pilgrims and strangers who tarry but for a night. With these feelings, *Christians overcome the influence of the world as an example.* The same motives which impel us to seek the society of others, impel us more or less to adopt their principles and habits. And the same depravity and forgetfulness of God which leads one class of persons to set an evil example, leads others to copy and follow it. God, however, demands that our imitation of others cease when it conflicts with obedience to his will. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Here the warfare begins, and the Christian alone is faithful and victorious. Unregenerate and unbelieving men are borne onward by interest and inclination, and regardless of the voice of God, choose the world for their portion; but the renewed and believing Christian hears the voice of Him who says: "Ye

are not of the world; I pray that ye may be kept from the evil of it."

Again, Christians overcome the love of the world as a *portion*. That same grace which reveals Christ in all his preciousness and fullness, discovers the emptiness and vanity of the world as a portion.

> "When I can say my God is mine,
> When I can feel his glories shine,
> I tread the world beneath my feet,
> And all the world calls good or great."

Both their taste and judgment respecting it are changed and modified by regeneration and faith. The desires of the soul are no more limited by the things of time and sense. They have a new spiritual appetite and perception, and while the unsatisfied of earth ask, "Who will show us any good?" their prayer is: "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Thou hast put gladness in our heart more than when their corn and their wine increased."

Every thing in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is fascinating to the corrupt heart, and gains an ascendant over all while in their natural state. But the regenerate person has higher pleasures, which he chooses as his supreme good, and for which, if need be, he would forfeit all of earth. He feels that earthly vanities debase the soul, and he will no longer be led captive by them. He says: "Depart from me, I will keep the commandments of my God."

In like manner Christians overcome the *fear* of the world. The world will take up arms against those who dare to oppose its maxims and its habits. Sometimes by contempt and ridicule, at other times by the most envenomed persecution, it will endeavor to check the Christian's progress. But the children of God are under his special care and protection; believing in Christ, they are strong in him and the power of his might.

Hence the world's hostility does not alarm them. Like distant thunder it vibrates on the ear, but it comes not near the heart, and if the whole creation were to rise up against them, they would say with the first disciples: "Whether it be right to hearken unto God more than unto you, judge ye."

But not only does the soul born of God and trusting in Christ overcome the trials and temptations of the world, but he also overcomes the fear of leaving it. Thus it was with Job; out of his distresses he cried, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" and David, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Thus it was with Paul; he had been no stranger to trials and temptations, and nobly did he bear himself through all, but the accents of triumph which burst from him on the confines of eternity, might well have compensated for all the thorns and roughness of the road by which he had travelled. Who but one born of God, whose faith is fixed on Him who is invisible, ever spoke in such accents as these? "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." He who could thus speak was a conqueror indeed; he was sure of victory, and he waited for death, not in the attitude of a victim, but of one who knew that he should triumph over his last enemy. Well might he say, to depart and be with Christ is better.

Paul stands not alone. The beloved disciple in a spirit of like glorious triumph, exclaimed: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And from the days of Paul and John until now, Christ hath never wanted a people reducing to holy and habitual practice their belief of the shortness and uncertainty of life, knowing that they have in heaven a better and more enduring substance.

So much for the declaration: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

II. We pass on to notice, secondly, the means by which he achieves it. "And this is the victory, even our faith."

The effect is here put for the efficient cause. Faith is the cause, the means, the instrument. The Christian to his latest hour has no strength in *himself*, but believing in Christ he is strong in the Lord. And through the faith thus formed in his soul he is enabled to maintain the conflict even to the end.

What then, you will ask us, is faith? It is not simply a belief that there was such a person as the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he came into the world to save sinners. It is not the adoption of an orthodox creed. Nor does it consist in a mere mechanical and unreasoning assent to the doctrines in which we may have been educated, and which flow from the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. There must, in order to a true faith, be an assent of the understanding, there must be a conscious prostration of our own reason before the profound and unfathomable wisdom of God, there must be an appropriation of the promises of God. By faith we must apprehend the all-sufficiency of Christ and the blessedness of that salvation which is so perfectly adapted to our necessities, and so worthy of his infinite greatness. We must look by faith on the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world with a personal apprehension of the magnitude of our sins which he came to take away. The language of a mere intellectual faith may be, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," but the language of saving faith is, "He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*."

The elements then of a true and living faith are, conviction, obedience, appropriation. These are inwrought by the Spirit of God, which convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, which develops the innate depravity of the human heart, impresses it with a consciousness of the wrath of God denounced against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men, which points to the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world, which connects deliverance from the condemnation of sin with divorcement from its pollution, and constrains him who names the name of Christ to depart from all iniquity.

Faith is the life of holiness based upon a principle of grace. A faith which is to endure the struggle and achieve the victory must be a living, working, loving faith. This will lead its possessor, in every conflict with the world, to remember that one principal end for which the Lord Jesus gave himself for us was to redeem us from all iniquity. Under this conviction, he girds on his armor, engages on the side of Christ, resolved that an object so dear to Christ, shall be accomplished. Who can estimate the constraining power of such a motive that asks, in every season of temptation, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God—God my Saviour and Redeemer?

Let the world seek to win him back to its allurements, he shuts his ears to its syren voice, and cries, Life, life, eternal life. Let the world and Satan say, All these things shalt thou have if thou wilt serve me, he answers by a fresh weapon drawn from the armory of truth, and walks under the powers of the world to come. His faith lays hold of the example of the Son of God, his heart recalls the blessed truths he uttered, and, *believing*, the world is conquered. Constrained by the love of Christ, he wars a good warfare, and thus endures unto the end.

While from faith the Christian derives his motives, from faith also he receives his strength. Who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth? By faith he is united to the Lord Jesus as a branch to the vine, and by faith also he receives out of Christ according to his necessities. In Christ he is strong and invincible, and through Christ he can do all things.

To the natural man, the conduct of the Christian is perfectly

inexplicable. He can not understand how a poor creature like himself can overcome the allurements of sense, the snares of the Devil, or the terrors of a wicked and hostile world. But the believer's strength, like his life, lies hid in Christ, and therefore it is that the worm Jacob shall thresh the mountain, shall rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel. *Thus* does he fight the good fight of faith, and thus is he made more than conqueror through Him that loved him.

In this subject, brethren, we are furnished with a test whereby to try our state; it is one from which there is no escape, it marks us distinctly and decidedly as born of God, believing in Christ, and overcoming the world; or as unregenerate, unbelieving, and overcome of the world. Are you born of God? Is yours a faith that lives, feels, acts, that listens to God's word with humility, that speaks to God in prayer, that "works by love and overcomes the world"? Nothing is more reasonable than to test the reality of faith by the object it was intended to accomplish. That which avowedly fails of its avowed purpose, is worthless, is dead, it will not profit. It may serve to pacify the compunctions of an easy conscience, but it will not abide the scrutiny of a Holy God. But if you have the principle of faith in your heart, and others are constrained to acknowledge that you war a good warfare, overcoming evil with good, then however long may be the conflict, it will still be true, ay, true to all eternity, that "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

We trust there are many present who can testify that there is nothing visionary either in the conflict or the victory of which we have spoken. Yours is the ever-present consciousness that life is a warfare. Fain would you fight over every battle in which you were vanquished, conscious that through faith in Christ you might overcome. To-day you would thank

God for every victory in the past, and take courage for the future, believing that he who has been your strength thus far is ready as ever to aid you in the struggle. I know not what your trials may be, but I know that in Christ there is strength equal to your day. I know not with what temptations you may have to contend, but I know that Satan can never hurl a weapon which the shield of faith can not turn.

The promise to him that believes, is not only that he shall be a conqueror, but *more* than conqueror. Grasp that promise in its unrestricted, boundless fullness—bind it to your soul, believing that neither life nor death shall ever be able to separate you from Him who has promised: "To him that overcometh will I give of the tree of life, yea to him will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne." Yet a little and you will have fought your last battle, you shall stand on the borders of eternity. Nay, ye shall enter in where no enemy can follow, and be of that company of whom it is written: "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb."

SERMON VIII.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. And he trembling, and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."—Acts 9 : 3–6.

Few men have filled so large a place in the world's history as the Apostle Paul. Of most of the great names of past ages it may be said that their glory has culminated and declined; but the name of Paul has never lost its lustre; on the contrary, each day has added to the almost countless multitude of those who from century to century have loved to think of his career, and have embalmed his memory in their hearts. As Jesus said of her who poured the precious ointment on his head, and so anointed him for his burial, so may it be said of this great Apostle, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world," there shall be found a memorial of him.

His conversion is one of the most remarkable events in New Testament history; and on these records he stands out with a singular prominence and individuality, while the impress of his character has been made not only on the Church of the Apostles, but upon the Church Catholic. The clearness of his perception of the truth in Jesus, stands in marked contrast with the slowness of heart of others who were in Christ and in the apostolic office before him. His boldness showed itself not as that of the impetuous Peter sometimes did, in empty words, but by heroic labors in many lands, amid perpetual peril of losing all that men hold dear. His burning, never-flagging

zeal for the glory of the Church, the extension of the Gospel, and the salvation of men, was like that described in Psalm 69, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Boldness, energy, and decision, were among the natural qualities of Saul; nor were these features lost, when, renewed by the grace of Christ, he became a new man. On the contrary they were still more strikingly displayed by him during the whole of his subsequent career. True religion, indeed, ever lays hold of the powers which man has prostituted and perverted to the service of evil, and enlists them in the cause of God and truth. Grace removes from the character of man only those features, and roots out of the heart only those principles, which are intrinsically evil, implanting truth in the room of falsehood, honor in place of dishonesty.

Paul was one of nature's noblemen. Blind he might be, and mistaken as to the real nature of the work in which he was engaged, but he brought to it a hearty earnestness and honesty of purpose. He verily thought he was doing God service while the powers of hell were exulting in what he did. He was just one of those intensely sincere and energetic men for whose conversion to God we can not help wishing the instant we come into contact with them. A vigorous persecutor, he became a still more vigorous preacher; strong in his self-righteousness, he became yet stronger in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; a zealous defender of the law, he became a no less zealous champion of the Gospel. For this very purpose did God raise him up; and nobly did he fulfill his exalted mission. Well may we praise him; for in so doing we only reflect honor upon the cross in which alone Paul gloried; we only magnify that grace of which Paul was so illustrious a monument and so eloquent an advocate.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus—the subject to which I invite your attention—is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the Church, and it is so whether viewed as an

example of the mercy of God, or as a proof of the divine origin of Christianity. Perhaps there was not then a person upon earth, whose conversion to Christ seemed more unlikely than that of Saul. He was conspicuous among the enemies of the cross; and accordingly, when Ananias was told to go to him, he replied, "Lord, I have heard by many, of this man;" and what he had heard made him no way desirous to see him. "I have heard what evil he hath done to the saints at Jerusalem." His name was one of terror to the infant Church; and at this very moment he had authority from the chief priests to bind all who bore the name of Jesus. In that scene of martyrdom in which holy Stephen was the victim, Saul was a consenting witness, if not an active agent. Yet he was not a rude, ignorant fanatic. He was a man of intelligence, and of culture. He was one of those who sat at Gamaliel's feet; and as a dweller in Jerusalem, he must have had many opportunities to see the tokens of the Spirit's presence, in the miracles of healing, and especially in the transformation of character among Christians.

Then, too, he was a Jew, and not a heathen. He was deeply imbued with the prejudices of the Jewish people, who were ever saying, "We be Abraham's seed;" "The temple of the Lord are we." He was one of the chosen race, beyond whose pale there was no salvation. This is one of the strongest bonds wherewith error and the devil enslave men. It is one of the secrets of that mystery of iniquity—Popery—by which she binds and blends her votaries to all her idolatry and corruptions. "We," say they, "are *the* Church, and out of our communion there is no salvation." Truly a miracle is needed to rescue the devotees of such a faith from its yoke. Saul of Tarsus saw in the Gospel the grand antagonist of the Judaism to which he was bound by the strongest ties, and hence all his feelings, whether of patriotism or of religion, his reverence for Moses, and his love for Jerusalem, combined to steel his heart against the claims of Jesus of Nazareth.

Nor was this all: he was a Pharisee, as well as a Jew—one of the strictest of that rigid sect—zealous for the law, and able to boast of a blameless obedience to its requisitions. Living in the proud consciousness of this, and of his merit before God, he could heartily join that other Pharisee noticed in the New Testament, in saying: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." A system which required him to renounce all such claims and hopes, and to confess himself a guilty sinner, deserving only of the wrath of God, could not be otherwise than abhorrent to him. Now such men are harder to reach than almost any other. "The publicans and harlots," said Christ to them, "shall enter into the kingdom of God before you." Hopeless, in our view, as is the case of the abandoned profligate, that of the proud Pharisee, with his spotless exterior, his seeming virtue, is still worse. Such, then, was Saul—a man whose conversion was to the last degree improbable, yet he became a new man in Christ Jesus.

Under what circumstances? Charged with letters from the chief priests, he starts for Damascus, on an errand of blood, breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of Jesus. It was while on this mad journey that a miraculous arrest is laid upon him. As he advances towards Damascus, and gets a distant view of that splendid city, we may fancy the thoughts which occupied his mind. Perhaps he is picturing to himself the consternation which the news of his arrival will spread among the unsuspecting Christians; with what suddenness he will burst into their assemblies; and his triumph, as he conveys his victims in chains to Jerusalem. Not a hint is given by the historian, of any misgiving or faltering, on his part. How utterly improbable the conversion of such a man, at such a moment! Yet that is the instant chosen of God for a marvellous display of his grace and power. And so God ofttimes permits the wicked to prosecute their plans till they are on the eve of accomplishment, and then magni-

fies his own power by putting a sudden stop to their career, in the way of mercy or of judgment. The wicked is caught in his own snare, and like Haman, is hanged upon the gallows which he had erected for another. Or, as in the case of Saul, the light of heaven shines upon his path, and gives the man new views of himself. The light which so suddenly dazzled Saul's eyes, exceeded the brightness of the sun, though it was seen at midday.

In one of his Epistles, Paul asks, "Have I not seen the Lord Jesus?" and declares that he had seen him, "as one born out of due time"—the last one admitted to the apostolic college. This undoubtedly was the occasion when Jesus visibly appeared to him. The veil that separates the visible from the invisible world, is for a moment withdrawn, and the bold and bitter persecutor of the Church is stricken to the ground by a sight of the effulgent glory of her divine Head and Lord. A voice addresses the blinded and terrified Saul; it is the voice of Jesus, whom he had persecuted, speaking not in wrathful indignation, but affectionate remonstrance. There is no reasoning, no vindication of Christianity, but the simple authoritative question: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" In the first verse we are told that he breathed out threatening and slaughter against the *disciples;* here Jesus speaks of himself, "Me," as the object of persecution. Christ and his people are one; hence what is done to either, is done to both. If any member of the body be touched, the head feels it; and so is it with the mystical body of Christ.

Saul replies: "Who art thou, Lord?" It was a question, we apprehend, of terror rather than of curiosity. The answer is, "I am Jesus"—not I am the Christ, I am the Son of God, but "I am Jesus," who thus identifies himself with the Church which bore his name in her witnessing and sufferings. We may well suppose that the words fell like a thunder-clap upon Saul's startled ear. He who spake from the cloud of glory,

and in the voice of majesty, was Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified as a blasphemer; Jesus, whom Saul believed to be a miserable impostor; Jesus, the extirpation of whose followers he was seeking with such zealous bigotry. Now he saw that the acts on which he had plumed himself, were deeds of violence not merely against men, but the Lord of heaven himself. He had been all the while persecuting Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. Subdued, as well as astounded by the wondrous revelation, Saul exclaims: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Where now is the fury of the persecutor? Those eyes that so lately flashed with malignant fire, are blinded by the blaze of Jesus's glory, and moist with penitential tears. Those hands which had "haled" men and women to prison, are now meekly clasped in penitential prayer. The once proud Saul now owns Jesus as his Lord. He has made the appalling discovery that he has been contending with the Almighty. He is subdued to the obedience of faith: "What wilt thou have me to do?"

"Arise," says Jesus, "and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." He arose from the earth, is led by the hand into Damascus, where he remains three days, unable to see, "and did neither eat nor drink." His physical blindness was doubtless designed to teach him how deep had been his mental. In silence and exclusion from the outer world, he is left to those soul-struggles which are ever produced in the inner man when the law of God comes in power.

In detailing these circumstances of Saul's bodily condition, at this time, the sacred narrator throws a veil over those inward struggles which attended his transition from darkness to light. Doubtless they were days of fearful anguish. "Souls like Paul's have terrible birth-throes." We have reason to believe that he has pictured his own experience in Romans 7th: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Now that he sees the

divine law in its extent and spirituality, his eyes are opened to behold the awful gulf that yawns beneath him. He finds that he is a ruined man; "slain" by the law which he once fancied he had perfectly obeyed; sins past reckoning rise to his view; and his pharisaic self-righteousness vanishes like a dream of the night. From the depths of shame, remorse, fear, penitence, he cries: "God be merciful to me a sinner." He casts himself at the feet of Jesus, and "behold he prays." The spiritual birth is completed; the blasphemies uttered, and the injuries done by Saul, "ignorantly," indeed, but none the less deserving God's wrath and curse, are blotted out in that precious blood which he had once counted an unholy thing.

A messenger of peace and comfort appears before him in the person of Ananias, whose dread of the notorious persecutor is disarmed by the assurance: "Behold, he prayeth." This was enough to assure him that the bloody bigot was now a believer; the injurious blasphemer had been made a new creature in Christ Jesus. He goes in the spirit of fraternal affection, he salutes him by the name of "Brother Saul," he bids him welcome to the family of Christ. And as in the exercise of that miraculous power with which he was invested, Ananias lays his hands upon the head of Saul, the scales drop from his eyes, his sight is restored, "and standing up, he was baptized." Thus was he publicly admitted to the fellowship of the Church, and formally dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ his Lord and Saviour. Immediately, we are told, Saul joined himself to the disciples, and openly appeared as the friend and champion of the truth, straightway preaching Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Yes! in those very synagogues which he intended to enter armed with letters from the high priest, requiring the delivery to bonds and death of all who had professed the name of Jesus, did Saul now preach that same Jesus, as the promised Christ, and the only Saviour, and with such cogent eloquence

and logic that his hearers could not resist the wisdom with which he spake. You are familiar with his history as "a preacher and apostle." The story of his conversion casts a light upon his subsequent career; and as you listen to his clear enunciation of the doctrine of justification by faith, you may here learn why he clung to it so tenaciously, and preached it so earnestly. He knew how vain is every hope which is not built upon the cross. He had tried hard to work out his own righteousness, and if any one had reason to trust in the flesh, he had. So it was with another great herald of this life-giving truth—justification by faith—Luther. He too, had tried works; so far as man could see, he was "blameless;" and yet, like Paul, he confesses himself to be "the chief of sinners," and looks for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life.

There are various topics connected with this memorable event—the conversion of Saul of Tarsus—on which I would gladly dwell, did time permit: such as his eminent fitness for the work to which he was called, and the evidence which his conversion affords to the truth of Christianity. But passing these, I proceed to remark:

1. That this history illustrates the sovereignty and omnipotence of the grace of God. Look once more at this man. If Pontius Pilate, or if Caiaphas had been converted, it would have been marvellous indeed; and yet to human view, Paul was quite as unlikely a subject as either of those men. Grace, however, singles him out, and manifests its exceeding riches and power, by subduing this unrelenting bigot, and bringing him to the feet of Jesus. Well did Saul know the magnitude of his debt to the mercy of the Saviour. "By the grace of God I am what I am;" "Not I, but the grace of God in me;" such is his uniform language when speaking of the great change.

2. We see under what unfavorable circumstances the truth of God often works its way, and accomplishes its end. Saul

would seem to have been beyond the reach of argument or persuasion; but He who is the King of truth can triumph over all circumstances, and bend them to his purpose. The heart of the jailer of Philippi, is rent by the earthquake which shook the prison; while Lydia's opens under the gentle influences of the word, as the flower softly opens to the light or the falling shower; Saul is suddenly arrested by a vision, and a voice from heaven. The providential circumstances attending these cases of conversion were different, but the subjective process is essentially alike in all, and the moral force by which the result is accomplished is ever the same, namely, the truth in Jesus, received by faith.

3. I remark that while conviction precedes conversion, it is not always followed by it as it was in the case of Saul. The voice of the preacher may arrest you, and like Felix you may tremble, or like Agrippa you may be almost persuaded to become a Christian. The truth preached, or the dispensations of Providence may have made your heart soft, but unless the influences of the Spirit of grace continue to descend upon you, it may harden again into a more obdurate impenitence. Conviction, perchance, has fastened this night upon your soul, and will follow you as you leave this place; but how will you act? Will you dismiss the call to life and light, or shall it be said of you, "Behold he prayeth?" May He who wrought mightily in Saul, work thus in you, so that humbled and penitent, you will fall at the footstool of mercy; renouncing every self-righteous hope, and crying: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

4. We learn this, the prominent characteristics of true conversion. Saul, once so blind, now sees; he who was once a proud Pharisee, is now a meek believer; he who was once self-righteous, now loathes himself on account of sin; he who was once so indifferent to the claims of Christ, now asks: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Professing Christian, how is

it with you? Do not think that all is well because you have been awakened. A consistent, godly life is the only sure and satisfying evidence that your profession is of the right sort. Good fruit is the only proof that the tree is good.

From the day that Saul of Tarsus embraced Christ, it was evident that a new principle ruled his life, that a new affection had possession of his heart. In many respects his was one of the most remarkable of lives, full of self-sacrificing toils, of ennobling virtues, of grand achievements. He himself explains how it was such: "The life I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." At the foot of the cross, where he found salvation, he found also the grandest aims and the mightiest motives. There he joyfully consecrated himself in soul, body, and spirit, to his Saviour Christ, and henceforth, by word and deed, proclaimed, "Living and dying, I am the Lord's."

SERMON IX.

CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."—Rev. 1 : 13.

These words are from the Book of Revelation, a most remarkable book, as its title imports, that is, its true title. It is not rightly denominated, as in most of our Bibles, the revelation of St. John. It is a revelation given to John, to show to the servants of God things which must shortly come to pass. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, not simply a revelation coming *from* Jesus Christ, but a revelation concerning Christ. It does not mean so much Christ the *revealer*, as Christ the *revealed*. The object of all Scripture is to reveal Christ; so that he may well be said to be its Alpha and Omega, its all and in all.

This book, however, is emphatically a revelation of Jesus Christ; and of Jesus Christ not as he was, but as he is, and is to come. The Old Testament Scriptures, in promise, type, shadow, and prophecy, revealed Christ as the promised Messiah and deliverer of his Church. Prophets and martyrs looked forward with hope; and as the Jew studied their glorious predictions, his mind became so absorbed with the brilliant picture that it lost sight of the humiliation of the manger, Gethsemane, and Calvary; and when Christ came, meek and lowly, his own received him not. After the Old Testament Scriptures, came the revelation of Christ in the Gospel; but this differed from that of *this* book. The Gospel set Christ before us in the attitude of a sufferer; this new revelation of Jesus is that of

one highly exalted. The gospels record his lowly birth, his life of toil and suffering, his agony, his bloody sweat, his cross, his passion, with but one glimpse of his glory—that vouchsafed to the three disciples on Tabor, the Mount of Transfiguration; *this* revelation describes his throne, his many crowns, his ransomed Church, brought forward to the perfect redemption and bliss of heaven. It was made to John in Patmos, whither he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian. He tells us that it was on the Lord's day, that is, the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, the day that commemorated the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He was "in the spirit;" not only in a rapture when he received the vision, but previous to the revelation he was in a serious, heavenly, spiritual frame, under the blessed influences of the Spirit. God usually prepares the souls of his people for uncommon manifestations of himself by his good Spirit; and they who would enjoy communion with God on the Lord's day, must endeavor to abstract their hearts from the world and set their affections upon God, and things heavenly.

There are passages in this book of richer imagery, connecting our hopes of heaven with all that is bright and beautiful, and sweetly urging us on in the way of life; but there is none better adapted to our present comfort, or more fitted to sustain and encourage us as members of the Church of God, than the revelation of Christ given in the words of our text. John heard a voice; he turned to see whose it was, and whence it came, and then a scene of wonderful vision opened itself. He saw a representation of the Church, under seven golden candlesticks, as it is explained in the concluding verses of this chapter. The churches are described as candlesticks, first, because they are the means of conveying, and holding forth light to a dark and benighted world. They are symbolized, not by candles, you will observe, but candlesticks. Christ only is our light; but they receive their light from Christ, and hold

it forth to others. They are *golden* candlesticks, to represent their preciousness in the sight of Jesus, and also that they should be pure, comparable to fine gold. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks, for he has promised to be with his churches always, even to the end, filling them with life, and light, and love, for he is the very soul of the Church. And then again you observe the glorious appearance of Jesus Christ; he is described as clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Now there are in these few things, delightful subjects of meditation; meditation that shall fill the heart of the believer with triumphant joy, in view of the fact that Christ is in the midst of the Church, her light and her defense, her High Priest.

Let us look *first* at the situation or position of the Lord Jesus Christ; *secondly*, at his habit; and deduce from these those consolations which they justly afford.

I. His position. He is in the midst of the seven candlesticks. There was in the temple, at Jerusalem, a golden candlestick that held seven lamps, which it was the business of the high priest to trim and light. This candlestick, by reason of the number of its lamps, was considered as seven, and represented the seven churches of Asia. The Son of Man standing in the midst, denoted that he inspected the condition of the churches, observing how they made their light to shine, replenishing them occasionally with needed supplies of his grace and spirit, and, by seasonable trials, trimming them whenever their declining light called for his interposition. Wherever Jesus Christ has a church, there he is in the midst of her. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He has said that he takes "pleasure in the gates of Zion more than in all the dwellings of Jacob." "This is my rest; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." What a glorious source of expectation is this! When

the Psalmist would describe the peace of Israel among the agitated nations, he says: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her." When the prophet Isaiah describes the Church restored from captivity, he represents her as saying: "Cry out, and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." And when the prophet Zechariah pictures Zion's redemption, it is in these words: "I, saith the Lord, will be her glory in the midst of her." "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo! I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." It is Christ's presence in the midst of the Church that has made her fitly represented by the bush which burned, and yet was not consumed. No matter into what furnace of trial she is cast, there is to be seen with her in that furnace the form of the Son of Man preserving, and sustaining her. The God in whom she trusts, her rock and her defense, will give her deliverance. With what a glory does this fact invest the Church, the assemblies of God's saints! Should it not lead us as we enter the sanctuary, to say: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven"? How, too, should it raise our expectations, to remember that Jesus is in the midst! Too often we look to an arm of flesh, the human instrumentality; our privilege is to look to the Lord of all. Christ is here; and what truth is there that is needful for your spiritual benefit, either in the way of conviction, instruction, or consolation, but that he can bear it home to your hearts and consciences? What, then, have you not reason to hope for and expect when you are in the presence of one so good and great? Can you fathom the mercy and goodness of God, or the love that exists in the heart of Jesus? He gives us his word and ordinances, and he hath promised abundantly to bless the provisions of his house, and to satisfy his people with bread. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" that is, when you come to me, my house, my ordinances, remember

you are coming to him who is the inexhaustible fountain, who giveth liberally, who says to you, respecting spiritual desires, "Be ye enlarged," and delights in them who hunger and thirst after the blessings of his grace. Christ in the midst is the fullness of all blessing. Who, as he has looked forward to the feast, has not asked: "Will the Master be there?" Without Christ, all is barren and profitless; the bread is mere bread, and the wine is mere wine. The Sabbath is a weariness, or, what is no better, a day without spiritual profit or spiritual perception. But if Jesus is pleased to reveal himself, we are led to exclaim:

"These are the sweet and precious days,
On which my Lord I've seen,
And oft when fasting on his word,
In raptures I have been."

Christ in the midst constitutes the heaven of the Church, gives to every believer the earnest and assurance of the better land.

II. Let us notice the representation we have of the habit or dress of this glorious person. He is represented as being clothed with a long flowing garment, and girt about with a golden girdle. These were garments such as were appointed for the high priest, and were designed to show his justifying righteousness, and his prevailing and effectual intercession. All commentators agree in representing this garment as denoting righteousness and honor. And what said the prophet Jeremiah, respecting Christ? "This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." This term, "righteousness," is sometimes used in Scripture to denote the whole of Christ's vicarious work—the active and passive obedience of Christ, whereby he perfectly fulfilled the law, and propitiated the justice of God. Now in the view which John had of him, he is represented as Jehovah, the righteousness of his people. Righteousness, or obedience to the mind and will of heaven, was essential to him, to his very nature. He was holy; spot-

less when he stood in the sinner's place. "A Lamb without spot or blemish." When Satan came to him, he had nothing on which to work; temptation fell as fire upon the unsullied snow; but when he took the sinner's place, he assumed a character and a work, in the prosecution of which he was laid under obligations to obey the law of God as the surety and substitute of his people. And so with respect to the penalty of the law: it fell not on him for his own transgressions, for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" but it fell on him because he bare the sins of others. He was our substitute, and therefore "he was wounded for our transgressions." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all." In working out a complete and justifying righteousness for his people, it was necessary that he should obey the law, and suffer its penalty. Having done both, we may well ask with Paul: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Christ hath obeyed, and Christ hath suffered. It is of great importance that we have correct and scriptural views of these great fundamental truths. We are told that "by one offering, he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified;" that he "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" that "though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" and being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all who obey him; and so by his perfect obedience, he became the end of the law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Thus is Christ set before us in the Scriptures, as "made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Our Lord once spoke a parable which we may here introduce as casting light upon this subject. It is that of a certain king, who made a marriage for his son, and invited many. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. The king saw this man, and he said unto him: 'Friend, how camest

thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment?'" He could not have entered by the door, for Christ is the door; he must have made his entrance some other way. If he had come by Christ, Christ would have put on him the wedding garment —the robe of his own righteousness.

When the poor prodigal returned to his father's house, it was in rags and wretchedness, and yet even such an one as he was, when his father saw him, he ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and he pressed the poor wanderer to his heart again, and the best of his house was not accounted too good for him. The ring, the token and mark of reconciliation, was put upon his finger, and the robe was not forgotten, the best robe, in which he might be presented to the assembled and rejoicing company, not as a servant, but as a son, a dear and honored son. Even so God reconciles his people, and clothes them with the righteousness of Jesus. Now when a man has been brought under the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit, when by the illumination of that Spirit, he has seen on one hand the uncompromising purity of God's law, the infinite and unchangeable holiness which he hath revealed, and on the other beholds in himself nothing but impurity; the best action that he ever performed, defective; the holiest that he ever conceived, stained by sin; the best prayer that he ever offered at mercy's footstool, a poor and earthly supplication, needing itself to be atoned for and pardoned; he comes to look about him for something better than he can find in himself, and God reveals to him the perfect righteousness of Christ, shows him how his obedience was perfect, and his love unfaltering, leading him through Gethsemane to Calvary. He shows him how, through the principle of an inwrought faith, all this is to be made over to his account, and then God helping the poor soul to overcome his unbelief and his natural distrust of such good news, the man comes at last in the strong and expressive language of the Bible, to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

But God chooses man to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit as well as belief of the truth; and, therefore, over and above the application of the righteousness of Jesus for the sinner as an offering to God and a satisfaction on his behalf, there is a work carried on by the Spirit in the soul of the renovated creature. He is delivered from the *bondage* of sin as God has set him free from the *condemnation* of sin. He who poured out his own most precious blood on the cross that sinners *condemned* might stand *acquitted*, sends down his Spirit to uproot the evil, implant holy desires, and carry on a work of progress until at last the region of that man's heart becomes like the spot of earth of which the prophet tells us: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it is to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

My dear hearer, is this your experience? If so, there is to you no more delightful view of Jesus in the midst of the golden candlesticks than that which exhibits his justifying righteousness. You look to him to-day, and at all times, exclaiming, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;" and your richest, truest, highest happiness, is when you feel that you, as a part of the Church, stand accepted in the Beloved.

But I must lead you on to contemplate him in yet another portion of his habit, "girt about with a golden girdle." This evidently refers to that part of the high priest's dress by which the golden breastplate was confined to his breast. You remember that every part of the vesture of the high priest was both rich and costly; none more so than the breastplate. The front of it was set with twelve precious stones, on each of which was engraven the name of one of the tribes. You will find a description of it in the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus. In the twenty-ninth verse you will see that it was particularly enjoined that Aaron, as the High Priest, should bind this breastplate upon his heart when he went into the holy place. This is designed, in its connection, to point out not only the knowledge that Jesus has of all that are his, but that he knows them

by name, and that he keeps them near to him by his golden girdle. Though in glory, Christ still executes the office of a Priest, presenting his blood before the mercy-seat, and still living to make intercession for his people. He would have it known to his Church that, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, he is a Priest upon his throne: "He shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Now it is your interest to realize this for yourselves, and to know that so surely as Christ is precious to you, so surely your name is on his breastplate, and you are not forgotten now that he hath entered into the holy of holies for you. Christ forgets not his own; he knoweth the things they have need of, and liveth to make intercession for us. How should this support, stay, and comfort us in coming to a throne of grace! He who knows us, carries us near his heart, ever lives to make intercession. We often in our blindness ask for that which would be prejudicial to our best interests; but He whom the Father heareth always, who hath loved us with an everlasting love, and asks only what is wise and good, pleads for us. Remember, too, that his love is unchangeable; it is owing to this that you have been preserved to the present moment. He knew before he set his heart upon you, that he would give himself for you; he had pledged and covenanted your salvation; and even for his own sake, he will not forsake you. He who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He who has brought you hitherto, will lead you to the end; will guide and uphold you till he has perfected the work of faith, and brought you safely through all your trials to sit down to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

And now, in conclusion, we observe, first, that if Christ walks in the midst of the Church, then is the Church secure. What says he respecting the Church? "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day." Again, of this Church, the lips of Christ

have said: "Upon this rock will I build my Church; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Every living stone in that building is the purchase of his blood, as well as the work of his hand, given unto him by his Father for this express purpose, that from such materials he might construct for himself a glorious Church.

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He whose word can ne'er be broken,
Chose thee for his own abode.
On the Rock of Ages founded,
Who can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's wall surrounded,
Thou canst smile at all thy foes."

"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" that is, the power and the craft of Satan can not destroy that Church which is founded on Christ. We have seen the Church in her primary state of holiness and innocence in Adam; she stood in her own strength, and fell. An attack was made upon her, and her glory was lost. But did she fall to rise no more? Did God cast off his Church which he foreknew? No; she rises in her second head; she stands in his strength, and not her own. Now let the powers of darkness, Roman Antichrist, Mohammedan Antichrist, the great apostasies, infidelity, formalism; let these combine; let the kings of the earth take counsel together; let them do the utmost which policy can approve, or power execute; let them persecute and legislate; let them curse and anathematize, as in times past; it will all be in vain. Their efforts, like the wind that rocks the kingly oak of the forest, shall but cause it to strike its roots deeper and broader.

"What though the gates of hell withstand,
Yet must this building rise."

The gates of hell never have prevailed against it. They may have seemed to do so for a season; but 'twas only an ap-

pearance. You do not suppose the sun is plucked from the firmament, or stars from their orbits when clouds have hid them from your vision. No. So clouds have sometimes gathered around the Church, and her enemies appeared to triumph; but at each season she has emerged with increased brightness. Did her enemies prevail against her on Calvary? They thought to do so, when they crucified her Head between two thieves. When they rolled the stone against the door of the sepulchre, they thought they had entombed forever not only Jesus, but the Church. But see what a show he made of them, openly triumphing over them. He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. He entered heaven a *victor*, and the powers of darkness were crushed beneath his feet. Did they prevail against it at the Reformation? No. Are they prevailing against it now? Go ask at the doors of the Bible House; and as you see emerging from them the leaves which are for the healing of the nations, recall that promise: "My word shall not return unto me void." Go to your Sabbath-schools, Bible-classes, your Tract Societies, your Missionary Societies, domestic and foreign; that noble army who are gathering materials from every tribe and tongue under heaven, and gather up proof that shall make you bold and hopeful of heart. And as the gates of hell never have, so they never shall prevail. The truth of prophecy, the faithfulness of God, the certainty of his purposes, the atonement of Christ, his glorious intercession, all forbid. But were there no prophecy, were there no sure word of promise, let me only fix my eyes upon the Son of Man walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and I ask no other pledge, no other evidence of the Church's security.

"The beams that shine on Zion's hill
Shall lighten every land;
The King who reigns in Zion's towers
Shall all the world command."

We observe, secondly, that if in heaven Christ still fills the office of a Priest, if he appears for us in the heavenly sanctuary, bearing the names of his Israel upon his heart as did the high priest of old when he appeared before God in the most holy place, then let us rejoice greatly in our redeeming God and Saviour. "We have not an High Priest which can not be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." You enter the church, the closet, you approach even to the Lord's table, conscious of a thousand infirmities, but if, conscious of these, your eye is fixed upon the righteousness of Jesus, as the ground of your acceptance, if you look to him alone, persuaded that if your prayer prevail, it must prevail only because presented by the High Priest of our profession, then may you come, boldly, confidingly to a throne of grace. Look to Jesus, touched with a feeling of your infirmities, and draw near with full assurance of faith. If you knew nothing of this Advocate with the Father, or if you knew him only as one immeasurably removed from all experience of your difficulties, you might be excusable for not coming to a throne of grace; but when God reveals him to your faith as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks clothed with his priestly garment, a Priest upon his throne, how shall you hesitate to bring to him your every want and burden, that he may heal every disease, soothe every sorrow, guide in every difficulty, guard in every danger. And if you would rejoice in the thought that your name is engraven upon that breastplate which is bound to his heart by the golden girdle, then let there be a personal appropriation of Christ and him crucified; a drawing near to God through faith in his atoning blood, and prevailing intercession. Christ knoweth them that are his. Go to him; give yourself up to him; confess his name before men, and he will confess your name before his Father, and before his angels.

SERMON X.

CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS.

"Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious."—1 Pet. 2 : 7.

Even in reading these words apart from the context, you do not need to ask, Of whom speaketh the Apostle, when he says: "Unto you who believe, *He* is precious!" Like Paul, every Christian knows in *whom* he has believed, and he also knows how precious He is into whose hands he has committed the interests of his soul. So emphatically is Christ the "all in all" of the believer, that his mind turns spontaneously to him as the Alpha and Omega of all excellence; and whatever there is enigmatical in type, or prophecy, or the sayings of God's Word, Christ is the key by which all is opened. Well may it be so. It is fit and proper that he who is chief of the works of God, should be the chief subject of his word; that he who fills heaven, should fill the book that gives us heaven.

Redemption is God's great work. Redemption by Jesus Christ is the grand theme of God's revelation; it was the last thing which man heard in Paradise lost; it will be the first thing that he shall hear in Paradise regained. The name and work of Jesus, like precious perfume, is diffused throughout the whole of this blessed book. He is the glory alike of both Testaments. Take him from the Old, and you have only a mass of meaningless types, ceremonies, and predictions; take him from the New, and there remains not even a shadow. In this sacred volume we have the testimony of men, of angels, and of God himself, to the preciousness of Christ. Patriarchs and prophets hailed his advent from afar; "Abraham rejoiced to see his day;" Job delights in the confidence that death would introduce him into his presence; Moses esteemed re-

proach for his sake more than the riches of Egypt; David regarded nothing in heaven or earth in comparison with him; Isaiah exulted in the prospect of his incarnation; all the prophets contemplated him as the Messiah and Saviour of the world; and when the fullness of time was come, angels announced his birth, and a voice from the excellent glory again and again proclaimed him the One in whom his Father was well pleased.

He is described by the Apostle as "chosen of God, and precious." God says he is precious; and believers say he is precious. Let us come and see Jesus; and if the Spirit shall deign to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us through the medium of his word and ordinances, we too shall say, "He is precious."

Let me endeavor to show: *First.* In what this preciousness of Christ consists. *Secondly.* The character necessary to appreciate and apply it.

I. *Wherein does this preciousness consist?*

Need I tell you that Christ is precious in himself? A jewel is a jewel, whether a blind man sees it or not. The pearl of great price is not of less value because it is hid in a field. Who is Jesus? The only-begotten Son of God; high above all principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominions; whose life was a treasure so priceless that it may well be said to have exhausted heaven's redeeming fund: there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. The value of Christ's sacrifice consisted not merely in the appointment of heaven, although this enters into the economy of redemption; but it is evidently set forth in Scripture as possessing an inherent value infinite in itself, because it is the blood of Jesus. The blood of bulls and of goats could not possibly take away sin; they were not of sufficient value.

In contemplating the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must not separate between the fact of his appointment to

the office of a Redeemer and the *inherent* value of the sacrifice which he made. It was the blood of the Son of God which was shed; it was the Lord of glory who was crucified. When the sword of justice awoke, it was against the man that was *Jehovah's fellow*. He only could take away the sins of the world who had *omnipotence* to bear them. Christ, then, is precious in his *person*. He is Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us. He is God manifest in the flesh; so that whatever is lovely in Deity, or lovely in humanity, are united in the person of the Lord Jesus—two distinct natures, but one person. Do you ask, Wherefore did the Son of God assume the nature of man? We answer, he became man for the redemption of men—the assumption of our nature being necessary to prepare him for the services and sufferings by which alone we could be redeemed. "Verily," says Paul, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham; forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, likewise, took part of the same." If an atonement was necessary, we can not conceive it to have been made by any other nature than that which sinned. If an angel had suffered, there would have been no display of the righteousness of God, because the nature that had sinned would have escaped with impunity. It behoved the Surety to be closely allied with the debtors; bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

The necessity of the union of the two natures further appears from the nature of the sufferings which our Redeemer had to endure. They were sufferings which would atone for the guilt of the people of God from the beginning to the end of the world. Human nature, unaided, would have sunk under them; they would have crushed the mightiest angel before the throne. As it was necessary, therefore, that the penalty of the law should be inflicted on the nature which had sinned, it was also necessary that that nature should be so sustained in the

conflict, as though, bruised and broken, not to be utterly destroyed. The Son of God took our nature in union with his own; he upheld it by the power of his divinity; and hence, although the man Christ Jesus experienced suffering unparalleled, he bore it with invincible fortitude, and closed the scene with those words of triumph, "It is finished!"

"I'll sing my Saviour's wondrous death,
He conquered when he fell;
'Tis finished, said his dying breath,
And shook the gates of hell."

Such was Christ in his person; and who that feels his need of Him, will not say that he is precious?

But, again, contemplate him in his *offices*, namely, those with which our Redeemer is invested as Mediator between God and man. This general office comprehends the particular ones of Prophet, Priest, and King. Each of these relations does Christ sustain to his Church, and in each of them he is precious. It was necessary that he should discharge the duties of all these offices, in order to the complete redemption of his people; for they were involved in ignorance, guilt, and pollution. As a Prophet, he removes their ignorance; as a Priest, their guilt; as a King, their pollution. The necessity of his doing all this is very clearly pointed out by the Apostle, when he says that Christ "is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." These offices relate both to God and to man—God being the immediate object of the priestly, and man of the prophetical and kingly office; and thus our Lord realizes the character of a Mediator by performing these duties; for he establishes peace between man and his offended God, and binds them together in intimate and inviolable friendship.

How precious to us is Christ in the character of a *Prophet!* "I know," said the woman at Jacob's well, "that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; and when he is

come, he will tell us all things." These words have no authority in themselves, as they were spoken by an ignorant and wicked woman; but they nevertheless show the prevalent opinion in the Old Testament Church, that the Messiah would solve all questions in religion, and make a clearer and more perfect revelation than was then enjoyed. It is the glory of Christ as a Prophet, that he has not only shed new light upon the subjects of which men before possessed some knowledge, but has disclosed that of which they had scarce any proper conception. It is chiefly on this account that he is called the light of the world. He has revealed his Father to us as a God of love, and himself in the character of a Saviour. What we wanted to know was not merely that there was one God, but that he was propitious towards us; not merely that we should worship him, but that our services would be acceptable; not merely that there is a state beyond the grave, but the means of attaining its blessedness. On these subjects he has given us full satisfaction. His words of truth and grace penetrate the soul, and are the power of God unto salvation. Prejudice, sin, and vanity, are scattered by the power of that light which he causes to shine into the sinner's heart. See Nicodemus timidly going to Christ, though convinced that he was a teacher come from God; by a revelation of the nature and necessity of the new birth, his soul is purged of its cowardice; and hence that same man, we are told, after the crucifixion, went in *boldly* unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Thus was it with the woman of Samaria; thus is it with every one who is taught of Christ, to whom he reveals his glory, and imparts the blessings of his grace.

He is precious also as a *Priest*. The two great duties of the sacerdotal office are sacrifice and intercession. "Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many;" and "when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." By his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The second duty of his office is *intercession*. It was typified by the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, where he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice, and burned incense before the mercy-seat; and it is carried on in heaven, of which that place was a figure. The death of Christ was a sacrifice not for one generation alone, but for men in every age. He ever lives to make intercession in the heavenly sanctuary; and hence "he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." The oblation of Christ satisfied every demand of justice, and cancelled the sentence pronounced by the moral law upon all who have violated its precepts. He finished transgression, made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Hence forgiveness is preached through him; and those who believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Nothing is necessary to our full pardon but faith in the great propitiation. A sure foundation is thus laid for the peace and comfort of every child of God; and if this is not his experience, it is because of the weakness of his faith. There is no burden of sin, no sorrow of earth, no conflict in the spiritual life, which we may not carry to him who is our great High Priest and Advocate on high. "If any man sin," says Paul, "we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the High Priest of our profession." Is he not precious? Did we not so esteem him when, burdened with guilt, we sought the foot of his cross? Did we not so find him when, pleading for mercy, we remembered that he was our glorious intercessor? Oh! cleave to this blessed truth; hold it fast as the very element of immortality. Lose sight of it and you may shut up this blessed book of God, and seal it forever; and your poor soul will stand exposed to the wrath and curse of heaven. But believe it, cherish it, and hide it in your heart, and there shall be no night of adversity in which Christ shall not be precious—precious because his advocacy in heaven is intimately connected with his sufferings on Calvary.

"Below, he washed our guilt away,
By his atoning blood;
Now he appears before the throne
And pleads our cause with God."

Christ is also precious as a *King*. As the crown, consummation, and glory of his mediatorial character, he is King of kings and Lord of lords. "All power," says Christ, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth; and lo I am with you always." Ought not this consideration to fill the minds of believers with holy confidence and peace in this vale of tears? Is it not a precious thought that we have a King in heaven who has the reins of universal government in his hands, to whom the principalities of heaven and the powers of hell are subject, who employs the services of the one, and overrules the malice and opposition of the other for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his people? All the dispensations of Providence are under his sovereign control, and even the darkest and most intricate are made to work together for their good. They need fear no enemy in life, no evil in death; for He who conquered death and the grave, and who holds in his hand the keys of both, will make his people more than conquerors.

If you are the subjects of his kingdom; if he has made you willing in the day of his power; if you have opened to him the door of your heart; if he has entered and renewed, enlightened and sanctified you; if he is now subduing your iniquities, and working in you the obedience he requires, then speak of the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power. Let nothing divide thy heart with Christ, and thou shalt say he is precious.

Again, we would remark that Christ is precious in his *all-sufficiency*. There is every thing in the Lord Jesus that is either needful or suitable, and every thing in and about him is precious. His blood, that cleanseth from all sin, is called precious. His promises, extending to every want, adapted to our every condition, are called exceeding great and *precious* pro-

mises. The faith which he imparts, and by which we are enabled to apprehend him and all his blessings, is called precious faith. His people are called precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold. Yea, even the Christian's trials, crosses, and persecutions for his sake, are precious. Who that has suffered for his Master's sake, can not say with Moses, that he esteems them greater riches than the treasures of Egypt? As our sufferings abound, so also, said the Apostle, do our consolations abound. We live in a world of trial. Tears will not cease to flow till hearts have ceased to wander. The reign of sorrow will exist as long as the dominion of evil; but amid all the vicissitudes of life, Jesus is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is the Friend made for adversity, the Brother whom we can not lose; and if in the world we must have tribulation, yet we may be of good cheer, for he has overcome the world. We may sow in tears, but we shall reap in joy. Heaviness may endure for a night, but through Christ joy shall come in the morning. And it shall be our acknowledgment in eternity, as it should be now, that amidst all the revolutions of time, and the sorrows of life, Christ is all-sufficient, and that sufficiency abiding and eternal.

We close this part of our subject with the remark that Christ is *increasingly* precious. There are many things upon the attainment of which we may write, "All is vanity;" there are others which lose their power to attract and charm us; but it is not so with Christ. The more we advance in the knowledge of him, the more we draw out of his glorious fullness, the closer we approximate the end of life, the more precious does he become. We brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it, one thing excepted, and that is Christ, the hope of glory. He is increasing light, life, and joy, to all who embrace him.

II. Who are they that can appreciate and apply this preciousness? "Unto you which believe he is precious."

We may make two uses of this declaration. We may take it as a test to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. What think you of Christ? Do you see a beauty in him that you desire him? Is he *increasingly* precious? You may feel great imperfections of character, and that sin mingles with your best performances, and you may mourn over your shortcomings: yet if Christ is precious in his person and offices, in his relations and his work; if every thing is precious to you that furthers his cause, and every thing hateful that impedes it; then, on the authority of God's blessed book, I tell you, you are a believer; you ought to credit the fact, and rest in his love.

On the other hand, if Christ is not precious, it is because you have not believed. Christ is not precious to unbelievers, because they have no views of his excellency; the god of this world hath blinded them, that they can not see Him. They know not their disease, and therefore feel no need of the Great Physician.

When a man first believes, he realizes that he is the wretched, fallen creature God has declared him to be; and then he believes what the Bible says respecting Jesus Christ, that, "God has made him to be a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This faith is not a mere act of the mind assenting to the truth of the Gospel as to any other truth upon credible testimony, but is a supernatural act, produced by the power of the spirit of grace, and is such a persuasion of the truth concerning the Saviour as calls forth exercises suitable to the nature of the object. It is a cordial approbation of the Saviour, a hearty consent to his offers, and an acceptance of him in his entire character, as made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

In all the descriptions of faith given by the sacred writers, it is represented as having immediate reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. They hold faith as clothed with attributes and

actions. It is called a *coming* to Christ, a *receiving* of him, an *eating* of his flesh, and *drinking* of his blood. When a man believes, he obtains an interest in the object of his faith; Christ becomes his, according to the promise of God. He enters into covenant with him; and while he takes him as his Saviour, he devotes himself to him in a way of holy obedience.

Let no man say he gives himself to Christ, who is not as anxious to obey him as to be saved by him. The real believer in Christ desires purity as much as pardon; to be made like Christ; to have Christ's image in his heart, and Christ's Spirit reflected in his life. This is the evidence of that faith which unites to Christ. If you have your fruit unto holiness, the end will be everlasting life.

On earth, to you who believe, Christ is precious: what, then, shall he be in heaven, when faith shall be lost in sight; hope, in possession; and mortality shall be swallowed up of life? But are there any here to whom Christ is not precious? I would say to such that there are two inquiries which you should seriously ponder, and which are closely connected—What think ye of Christ. What does Christ think of you? The answer to one of these, will furnish a reply to the other.

"What think ye of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You can not be right in the rest,
Unless you think highly of him.

"As Jesus appears to your view,
As he is beloved or not,
So God is disposed toward you,
And mercy or wrath is your lot."

SERMON XI.

A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN.

"I LOOKED, and behold a door was opened in heaven."—REV. 4 : 1.

WHEN John leaned upon the bosom of Jesus, a distinguished honor was conferred upon him; but during his imprisonment in Patmos, he was admitted to far more intimate fellowship with his Master, when those wonderful revelations were made to him, which he has described in this book. He had seen Jesus in the days of His humiliation; he had seen Him on the mount of transfiguration; he had seen Him ascend up to heaven; but here, in Patmos, he gets a view of the majesty and glory of the Saviour, at once new and overpowering, His eyes are like a flaming fire, his countenance like the sun shining in his strength, his voice like the sound of many waters, and in his right hand are seven stars. No wonder that John fell at His feet as dead.

But this magnificent vision was not for the Apostle alone. He was charged to write what he saw, of the things "which are now, and which shall be hereafter," for the instruction of the universal Church. Blessed he was in being chosen by his Master to see and describe these things, and blessed also are they who read the record, and keep the things written therein. John is first of all charged with certain messages of love and warning to the seven churches of Asia Minor; and next he says, "I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven," through which he was permitted to look down the long vista of coming centuries, and see "things that should be hereafter."

I propose to direct your attention to the fact stated in the words of my text—"the door opened in heaven," and to in-

quire how this door was opened, the persons for whom, and the purposes for which it was opened.

Heaven may be considered both as a *state* and a *place*. As a state, it may be experienced any where out of hell. We may have a heaven on earth in communion with God. We need not go beyond the stars and seek that world where the seraph strikes his golden harp, and the palm-trees flourish in eternal youth. No! Give us the heart where Jesus abides and reveals himself to the soul, and there is heaven, then the kingdom of God is *within us*. When Jacob awoke from his privileged slumber at Bethel, he exclaimed, in view of what he had seen and heard: "This is the gate of heaven." When the disciples stood with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and beheld his glory, that was heaven to them, and they said: "It is good to be here, let us build tabernacles and abide." Heaven is the revelation of Christ to the soul. The saints may be joyful in glory even while they are on the earth. Happiness is not confined to place, it depends not on external things, it may raise its song of praise from the inner prison at midnight, or even at the martyr's stake. There can be no heaven that does not begin here in the heart. What is the heaven of the unrenewed man? It is a heaven without God and without holiness—it may include many things truly desirable to the spiritual mind, but will want much that constitutes the heaven of the Christian. The Bible—the throne of God, would not be there. There would be no casting of crowns at the Saviour's feet—no song worthy the Lamb—no service, day and night, crying, Holy, holy, holy. Why should there be? Will men erect a throne for God in heaven, if they will not erect one in their own hearts? Will they cast their crowns before the Saviour in heaven, if on earth they crucify him afresh, and tread under foot his precious blood? Ah! we have heaven begun in our hearts here, if we would enjoy its blissful realities hereafter.

Although heaven is chiefly to be viewed as a *state*, it is also to be considered as a *place*. It is the residence of Deity—the place where God shows forth his glorious presence—the habitation of his holiness. A great and good man (Dr. Chalmers) has endeavored to prove that heaven is not a locality, but simply a state, but it seems to me both reasonable and scriptural to believe that heaven is not merely a state, but also a place. As man, Christ has a body, but that body is bound by the laws of time and space. Enoch, Moses, and Elijah have the resurrection bodies, and they must be somewhere. True, God can make any place heaven by there revealing himself and communicating the fullness of his love, but this is nothing to the purpose; our business is not with speculations about his power, but the declarations of his word; and that word uniformly supposes that there is a particular place appointed to the final abode of the righteous. It is the residence of our Lord Jesus Christ in his glorified body. Our Saviour said to the penitent thief: "This day shalt thou be *with me* in paradise." To his disciples he said: "I go to prepare a *place* for you." Yes, there is a *place* far beyond the reach of human eyes or human thought, where the redeemed of the Lord shall dwell in one holy brotherhood. There they shall be brought near to the throne of the great King and behold his glory. But we must not attempt to describe what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive," the sanctuary "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." What a glorious place must that be, which needs neither the sun nor moon to shine there, for the glory of God and the Lamb are the light thereof, and the nation of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. Now, to this world a door has been opened. How? and by whom?

The declaration that the door was opened, implies that it had been previously shut. Sin had shut the door against us. When God drove man out of Eden, and guarded the way to

the tree of life by cherubim and a flaming sword, he declared that heaven was not to be entered upon the terms of the covenant of works. This brings to our view the Great Deliverer, Christ the Mediator of a better covenant. He opened heaven for us, and we are not ignorant of the manner in which it was accomplished. As the high priest of old entered into the holy place not without blood, so even Christ entered not into heaven until he carried with him his own most precious blood. To open heaven for believers, was the object for which he came into this world. For that, he took upon him our nature, bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; for that, he trod alone the wine-press, agonized in Gethsemane, and yielded up the ghost on Calvary. But for this, Gethsemane had never heard that prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" or Calvary that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

A door opened in heaven was the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, and when he had magnified the law and made it honorable, and satisfied the justice of God, he cried: "It is finished." Heaven responded: "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The sufferer on Calvary, he is the King of Glory." He entered heaven in behalf of his people. "Let not your heart be troubled"—he entered into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us; and mark the beautiful connection, the links in the chain—when Christ entered heaven, having opened the door for us, he sent down his Spirit to renew, purify, and fit us for that which he had purchased—yea, to seal us unto the day of *perfect* redemption.

Christ hath opened heaven for believers: this is the *great* truth of the Gospel—the great truth of Scripture, which like Aaron's rod swallows up every other. Promise, type, pro-

phecy, miracle, all bear witness to and unite in explaining and enforcing it. Could a door have been opened in heaven by any other means, it would have been done. But the Bible while it reveals heaven opened to us, sets forth Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life." That "no man cometh to the Father but by him." That there is salvation in none other, "For it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell."

Now there are multitudes who decline this way to heaven; who, seemingly ignorant of God's righteousness, or like those who never heard the tidings borne by the heavenly company to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem; go about to establish their own righteousness, trusting to their morality, or their reformation, or their prayers, or their freedom from gross sins, or their good works. But I put it to the common-sense of every man, whether Christ would have come into the world to save us at such a cost to himself, if we had not been beyond all hope of self-recovery? Can you imagine that he bled and died for naught? that without any necessity he drank a cup of sorrow at which his nature started back in horror, while the earth quaked and the sun hid his face? No! we are compelled to believe that if a door could have been opened for us into heaven, consistently with God's justice, and the claims of truth and righteousness, heaven and earth would never have witnessed the sorrow, shame, and death of the Son of God.

II. For what purpose was this door opened in heaven? To John it was a door of revelation: "Come up hither and I will show you the things that must be hereafter;" he looked in and saw many things of which you may read in this book. Ours is the same privilege; we too, in the light of revelation, can look in at this open door and see what Stephen saw, Jesus standing at the right hand of God. We can see there those who died in the faith of Jesus, clothed with white robes and

palms in their hands, the spirits of just men made perfect, the apostles and prophets. There, too, we may see loved ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus; their bodies may rest in some far distant land, their place of sepulchre may be unknown to us; but through this open door we may see them within the vail. No more sorrow, pain, or sickness; the weary of the earth are at rest there. We can see them at their employments, and anticipate the hour when we shall join them.

To many a weary pilgrim on earth, "faint yet pursuing," God says, as he did to John, in Patmos: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." "Seest thou these with white robes and palms in their hands, God's name in their foreheads? These are they who lately walked with you in the vale of sorrow and conflict; they have got their crown. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee also a crown of life. Seest thou Him who sits upon the throne and dwells among them? 'They shall hunger no more nor thirst any more, for he that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'"

This door is one of intercourse. Through it Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending. Christ is the channel of all blessings, they all flow to us through that door which he has opened. Through it come those ministering spirits who are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. But, above all, that Holy Spirit which rested upon Christ at his baptism, comes through that open door to rest upon his members as it then rested on the Head. Christ said: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." The Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, the Enlightener, the Comforter, flows to us through this door which Christ has opened. Every true child of God has an experimental knowledge of this truth. He knows it, and has proved it. He has been conscious of it at times from the hour when he first be-

lieved in Christ; and whenever he needs consolation he turns his eye to that open door, and asks, believing that if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, much more will our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

It is also a door of entrance. Christ's prayer was: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." That prayer of Him whom the Father heareth always, and which was offered in terms such as none other ever was, "I will," had reference to the personal admission of his disciples to heaven where he manifests that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Trusting to the efficacy of that prayer, Paul knew that to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord. Now, in these days of our pilgrimage, it is by faith alone that we have entrance into heaven. Believers, even now, through this open door, may enter into the gracious presence of God. But we speak of it more particularly as a door of future actual entrance—the entrance that awaits our spirits when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved—the entrance of both body and soul at the resurrection. Of that entrance the present is an earnest. He who now has access into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, has in every such approach an earnest and assurance of his abundant admission at last into the kingdom. That kingdom is not for all; it is only for those who love God, and are thus fitted for it. "Except," said Christ, "your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment." "This is the commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." When through this door, opened in heaven, John was favored with a view of the celestial city, he was told that there should in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomina-

tion, or that maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Who are they who have already entered into heaven? Abel is there, the first of Adam's children admitted into that blissful place. Enoch, who long walked with God, is there, translated in body and soul, that he should not see death. Elijah, who in an age of general declension was very zealous for the Lord of Hosts, is there, carried thither in a chariot of fire. Patriarchs and prophets are there, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. And with these, a great multitude which no man can number—a multitude whose names, though not found in the rolls of earthly fame, are written in the book of life—a multitude out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "*Therefore* are they before the throne." And if we too would enter there, we must be made *meet* for the inheritance of the saints in light. Except a man be born again, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. What happiness could he find in heaven, even if admitted there, who carried with him a heart destitute of all sympathy with its occupations and pleasures? God will never permit any one to enter heaven and be unhappy there, and therefore if you would enter through the opened door, you must first be made *meet* for heaven.

Finally, We would remind you that this door will not be always open. That which was opened, we are told, shall one day be shut. See Matt. 25 : 7–10, and Luke 13 : 23, 27.

These passages of God's word teach us that there is a twofold shutting of the door. First, at the end of the world, as to the human race, when time will be no more; and second, at the end of our individual life—that, with each one of us, will be the shutting of the door, the determining of our character and condition for eternity. We believe that not unfrequently this may be determined before death. Instances are not

wanting in which men and women have cried out, long before death, "*Too late—Too late.*" The harvest is past, the summer is ended, the door is shut. The word of God uses words of solemn import on this subject. It says: "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone"—and that man is doomed of whom God says to his Holy Spirit, *let him alone.* The day of grace may terminate before the close of life. "Oh!" said Christ, "that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."

There are few but pass through seasons peculiarly favorable to salvation, long antecedent to death. That bed of sickness when you were awakened to serious reflection; that breaking up and disappointment of your schemes and hopes, when you were made to feel the vanity of earth; that bereavement in which God softened your heart, taking away the desire of your eyes with a stroke; that dying believer triumphant over the last enemy, who testified, amid the swellings of Jordan, to you of Jesus and his love, and whom you almost saw pass into that open door of heaven, compelling you to exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;" that sermon when conscience was awakened, and the word came to you in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Oh! these were precious seasons—days of salvation: why did you not make them an accepted time? You may have had your last warning; you may be hearing your last sermon; you may have had your last sickness; when death comes, he may summon you in an instant. Under the dispensations of God's hand you may be feeling as you will never feel again; but like Felix, you may be saying: "Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee." That time may never come. Says God: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." To-day then we point you to a door opened in heaven—opened by the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Let me counsel you that ye strive

to enter in, that with eager desire ye press on towards it. In a little while your desire shall be fulfilled, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Ye shall enter within those opened portals, and your soul shall gaze upon the wonders of its completed salvation. What pearly gates are these, what jasper walls, what streets of shining gold? Why, this is heaven, and these the spirits of the just! I see again my loved ones, and there is Jesus, *the* Beloved of my soul, clothed with the glorious majesty of his Godhead! Shall not this prospect give new life to our efforts, and fresh fire to our zeal to enter by that door, and take others with us to that better land? Prophets and martyrs beckon you on from their starry thrones. Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, bids you come, weary and heavy laden; press on while yet ye may. Be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, and remember that, while the righteousness of Christ is your title, sanctification by the Spirit is your qualification. Remember that while the way by Calvary leads to an open door in heaven, and that while heaven will be a world bright with glory and joy, it is, after all, a holy place prepared for holy people, and that the unsanctified shall not enter therein.

We would fain speak only of heaven, but we must admonish some that there is another world, and that, if they miss that open door, that other world must be their everlasting portion. Hear then the voice of Him who came to seek and to save, the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. His declaration is: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon while he is near. Your harvest is not yet passed, your summer is not yet ended. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Believing in Jesus, and walking in his commandments, when the present life is ended, you shall pass through the opened door into the Saviour's immediate presence, where is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

SERMON XII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

"WHO shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—PHIL. 3 : 21.

CHRIST died to redeem the whole man—the body and the soul. "I know," said Job, as he looked upon his failing flesh and wasting frame, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The patriarch was correct in his views of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the consequences of his advent to his people. If we are among those who by God's grace possess the first fruits of the Spirit, in the renewal and sanctification of our hearts, we too are authorized to anticipate confidently this further result of our adoption into the divine family, namely, "the redemption of our body."

The blessedness flowing to the people of Christ from his second coming, will not consist simply in that which is appropriate to their spiritual nature, but will include that of which a risen and glorified body is at once the subject and the vehicle —a body reünited to the soul by a bond which shall be henceforth indestructible. Hence we sorrow not for them who are fallen asleep in Christ, because we know that, absent from the body, they are present with the Lord, and that the flesh, though slumbering in the sepulchre, rests there in sure and certain hope of awaking again into newness of life. We look for him to come the second time, who is able to work the mighty change described in the text. The doctrine here taught is full of godly comfort to the disciples of Jesus. There is, indeed, no true happiness for us in this vale of sorrow, unless we have

been taught to understand, and personally enjoy, what we are here told concerning the abolition of death. The monuments that bestrew our cemeteries, the mourners that go about our streets, the tolling bell, the habiliments of mourning that flit across our path in every direction, all admonish us that we are passing away. It matters not, my hearers, how much of earth's honors, wealth, or friendships we possess, there is one ever-present and overshadowing cloud thrown like a pall over them and us, unless we are interested in the salvation of Christ. Give me, above all things else, the hope and joy of him who can say, "I know in whom I have believed," "I know that my Redeemer liveth—that he will change my vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body."

In discussing the topics suggested by the text, we may notice,

I. *The subject of this change.* It is this body, here denominated "vile"—a term which would not have been applicable to man's body when he came fresh from the hand of God. Then it was "very good." But when sin had brought down its blighting curse upon the transgressor, and had planted the seeds of death all over God's fair creation, deformity took the place of beauty, and what had been else immortal became the prey of corruption. Man's body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, the crowning work of the Creator, the fit tenement of a soul formed in the divine image, bore the sad tokens that "sin reigned unto death." Henceforth it became, even in its best estate, and however beautiful, a "vile body," or as the text literally reads, "the body of our humiliation." As it was originally formed of the earth, that which now supports it comes from the earth, and it shall in the end return again to its earth. Decay and dissolution have sealed it as their own.

But more than this is intimated by the words, "a vile body." The name is deserved, because it yields its members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; it executes the behests of

the evil passions of a depraved heart; and is itself the seat and source of many temptations. It is a mortal body, and therefore a "body of humiliation." It must be resolved into rottenness and dust. Death renders the fairest form loathsome to us, and like Abraham we are forced to bury our dead, however dearly loved, out of our sight. Compared, then, with what it was when it came from the hand of God, with what it would have continued to be if sin had not marred and ruined it, or with what it shall be when Christ shall re-fashion it into the likeness of himself, it may well be called "a vile body," "the body of our humiliation," its features sadly in keeping with those of its fallen and degraded inmate, the soul. But he who regenerates the inward is able also to recreate the outward man into the likeness of his own glorious body.

II. *The Author of this change* is the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body when he comes from heaven. And it is obviously fit and proper that Christ should be the author of this transformation. He ascended to heaven clothed in a body similar to ours, that in our nature as well as name, he might take possession of the purchased inheritance. It is right and proper that He who prepared a heaven for us, should also prepare us for heaven. So we are assured by himself, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "I would not," says Paul, "have you to be ignorant concerning them that are asleep; them will God bring with him." "All who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He who stood at the grave of Lazarus, and by the simple words, "Come forth," restored a dead brother to the arms of his mourning sisters; He who at the gate of Nain, by a simple touch of the bier, gave back a dead son to his widowed mother, is entitled to say, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live." He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and therefore we can not

doubt that "the hour cometh when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth." The Saviour and his saints are one, in a vital union; they are so closely connected that he describes them as parts of "his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," and as the head arose in triumph from the dead, so too must the members arise from that sepulchral bed where they now sleep in Jesus. But the text not only predicts a resurrection, it also announces,

III. *A change*—a change in our vile body. What is the nature of it? I answer, that whatever it be, there will still be a body. Perhaps the idea of the Apostle will be better brought out by rendering the words, "Who shall *re-fashion* our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of his glory." In the resurrection, at the last day, we shall not receive a body totally new and different from the old. Substantially it will be the same body that was committed to the tomb—for all the purposes of grace and justice, the same body—but it will be transformed into the likeness of the body of our ascended and glorified Redeemer.

You must not forget the facts involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Our Lord Jesus Christ assumed our nature; becoming man, he took our flesh and blood, and when he went into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us, it was in that same humanity in which he bled and died. The man Christ Jesus, who was once laid in Joseph's sepulchre, now stands at the right hand of God, wearing the crown and wielding the sceptre of universal dominion. As God he could neither ascend nor descend; his divine essence fills heaven and earth, and he is incapable of the least shadow of change. And, oh! how rich a source of consolation is it to his people to know that he has not laid aside their nature, but retains it amid the ineffable splendors of the heaven of heavens. They can look up to him in the full confidence of his sympathy, and discover in his exaltation an earnest of their own future and transcendent glory. Their bodies shall be changed, how they

can not tell, they can hardly even imagine; only this they know, that they shall be made like to the glorified body which their Saviour Christ now wears in heaven. He will *so* refashion them as to bring them into a resemblance to himself. Beyond this point, my brethren, we can not at present go. A veil of mystery—'tis one of the mysteries of grace—hangs over the subject, which no mortal man can withdraw.

God has been pleased to apprise us of the fact that there shall be a change, that the pattern according to which the refashioning shall be made is Christ's glorious body, and with this we must be content. We may perhaps get some dim idea of the coming glory, from the account of what occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the countenance of Jesus appeared more radiant than the sun, and his raiment whiter than the snow, and when the favored three who beheld the august scene in transport exclaimed, "Let us abide here forever." The clouds which had veiled the brightness of the star of Bethlehem were suddenly opened, and Peter, James, and John were permitted to gaze upon its full-orbed splendor. The transfiguration of the Redeemer was effected in an instant of time, and thus shall his people arise and put on their beautiful garments, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; so shall their vile bodies be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.

In that sublime argument on the subject of the resurrection, in 1 Cor. 15, the apostle sets forth the chief features of this marvellous change. The body, which is sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; that which is sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory; that which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power; that which is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual body. The body is *sown*, that is, committed to the earth like a seed. How striking and beautiful the image here used! The sowing in corruption not only refers to the literal corruption which awaits our mortal frame, but also to

the fact that the body, as it now is, tends to dissolution. When raised again it will be incorruptible, freed from all tendency to decay, from all those seeds of death which are found in the strongest of our earthly tabernacles. Exempt from the accidents of time, from calamity in any form, from thirst and hunger, it shall possess an immortal vigor; in a word, mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

It is sown in dishonor. We commit to the grave the mortal remains of those dear to us, with tokens of sincere and tender sorrow, or it may be, we employ martial pomp and pageantry to indicate our respect for departed worth or greatness; but amid the most gorgeous funeral display, the fact stands out before us, that the immediate object of these honors is a "body of humiliation," a body which we are forced to bury out of our sight. It is, after all, dust returning to dust, ashes to ashes. Corruption has already seized it as its prey, and it will soon say to the worm, Thou art my brother. We put it away from us, that we may not witness its dishonor. But it shall be raised in glory, immortal, redeemed forever from the empire of death. Fashioned like unto Christ's own glorious body, it shall thus be remoulded after the highest, the most honorable, the most honored type of humanity. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him." Well, then, might David sing, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness."

It is sown in weakness. Frailty is one of the most marked characteristics of our present condition. We are crushed before the moth. These poor bodies can be sustained only by continual supplies of nourishment and rest. We are worms of the dust. But in the future life we shall be like the angels that excel in strength. Here effort speedily brings on weariness, but in our changed bodies we shall serve God day and night without cessation and without fatigue. We shall live and labor in the might of an unwasting energy, with the vigor of immortal youth. Finally, we are told, though it is hardly

possible for us now to comprehend the meaning of the terms, that the natural shall be changed into a spiritual body, since flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God. We shall not be transmuted into pure spirits, such as the angels; we shall still have bodies, but bodies freed from that animal grossness and sluggishness that now belong to us—capable, we have reason to believe, like the body of the Saviour, after he had risen from the dead, to pass through material substances with the utmost ease, and to move through space with the rapidity of light. All our organs of sense shall be adapted to a higher and nobler state of being than that in which we now are, and all of them, instead of being the ministers of temptation, shall be the handmaids of holiness.

Such is the nature of the change which Christ shall effect in the bodies of the righteous, at his second coming; they will be in every respect adapted to perform the duties, and to share in the enjoyments belonging to that heavenly world, in which they shall dwell forever. They shall be capable of sustaining the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Then all will be beauty, all will be love; sorrow and sighing, disorder and death shall have forever fled, and the spiritual body in its incorruption, its glory, and its power shall be a fit instrument in all its exercises, a meet companion as it travels along the pathway of endless blessedness. Oh! what a change this shall be. Language can not describe it, imagination can not conceive it; we only know that it is a part of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

IV. By what power shall this change be effected? How shall it be accomplished? What pledge is given to us that hopes so grand as these shall be realized? Do they repose upon a solid foundation? or is it among the things incredible that God should raise the dead? There is room for neither doubt nor speculation. What Christ *hath* done, he can do again. In the days of his flesh he showed the working of that mighty power by which he can and will subdue all things

unto himself. By a word he recalled the dead to life. When he himself came back from the sepulchre, in which, with his lifeless body, the hopes of his faint-hearted disciples were for the time buried, the graves of many saints who had been long asleep, were opened, and their occupants came forth and appeared unto many, the pledges of the Redeemer's omnipotence, the proofs of his complete victory over death and hell. It was a visible token that he who died upon the cross had ransomed the bodies as well as the souls of his people. The resurrection of the body is attributed to the power which governs all things, and nothing less than the energy which at first produced the human body, can restore it from its present lapsed and degraded condition to the glory with which it was originally clothed. He who created it, can with infinite ease re-create it, and re-fashion those elements which constitute its essence, so that while changed from vileness to honor, from the natural to the spiritual, its identity shall remain. I see the working of this mighty power in the world of nature and of providence around me. I behold the operation of the same omnipotence in the kingdom of grace, in the calling of guilty men from the death of sin to the life of holiness. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." By his word and Spirit the soul is raised from the grave of a darker and more loathsome corruption than that to which the body turns, and breathes into it a new and divine life. Here, in this assembly, there are monuments of this omnipotence and grace. Here are living witnesses to the truth that God can and does transform the once dead soul into the image of his Son. And he can as easily change our vile body into the likeness of the glorious body of Christ. Faithful is he who hath promised. How he will accomplish it, gives me no concern; enough that He who has all power in heaven and on earth is pledged to do it. Nor has he left us without a witness of his power. If I had never seen the death of winter succeeded by the manifold life of spring; if I had never seen the seemingly dead seed

burst forth from beneath the soil into "the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear;" if I knew nothing of my own body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, I might look forward to the grave as the extinction of man. But now I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that when he comes the second time, he will raise and re-fashion the dust of all those who sleep in him.

The doctrine of the text is full of the most precious and practical lessons. It shows us how infinite are our obligations to the Son of God who humbled himself to assume our nature, and in that nature triumphed over death and hell. To him we are indebted for all the glorious hopes which belong to saints. Let faith then ascend the mount of promise, and across the swelling Jordan of death, she will discover not only the green fields of a goodly land, but a land peopled with the myriads of the redeemed. Hail happy day when soul and body shall be reünited in a bliss exalted, endless, and perfectly adapted to the capacities of each! Among the primitive Christians, the thought of this consummation was the source of perpetual joy; they lived under the powers of the world to come; they felt that earth was not their home, and while using the things seen and temporal, their hearts cleaved to those unseen and eternal. And here was the secret of that strength which enabled them to brave the terrors of martyrdom for the name of the Lord Jesus.

This subject supplies an antidote against the fear of death. What is it to die, in the case of those who are in Christ? It is to be unclothed that we may be clothed upon—that mortality may be swallowed up of life. To die is a necessary condition of the change of our vile body into a glorious one. A grain of wheat is not quickened except it die; and so we die that we may live for evermore.

Corruption, worms, and earth
Shall but refine this flesh
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.

And oh! what comfort does this subject afford to those who are mourning the loss of loved ones in Christ! We lose much when we lose a parent, a husband, a wife, a child, a friend; and if Jesus himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, so may we when death removes from our sight those dear to us. Our Lord has not only sanctioned, but consecrated the mourner's tears. But we should not weep as those who have no hope, when it is for those who sleep in Jesus. Our friends are not lost, they are only gone before us to the better country; they live a nobler life than we; they have run the race, and have won the crown; and we commit their bodies to the tomb in sure and certain hope of resurrection to life eternal. Their precious dust reposes there under the Redeemer's constant care and watch, and in due time it shall awake in his own glorious image.

This doctrine should prompt us to obey the exhortation of the Apostle, "to glorify God with our bodies," with all our physical as well as our intellectual powers. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Knowing this, we should purify ourselves as Christ is pure, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We ought not to allow our bodies to be used as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. Let us remember their high destiny. A wondrous change awaits us poor worms of the dust. These eyes shall behold the King in his beauty. These very feet shall tread the golden pavement of the holy city, the New Jerusalem. These very voices shall help to swell the everlasting anthems of heaven. Seeing ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness! But what can I say to those in this assembly who are not in Christ, and who have no hope of a "better resurrection?" This doctrine ministers legitimate comfort only to those who have embraced Christ as their Saviour, and have fled to him as their only refuge. This, like every other doc-

trine of God's word, resembles the pillar that led Israel out of Egypt to the promised land; it has a bright side towards God's people, and a dark side towards his foes. If we would have a share in the promised glories of the Saviour's second coming, we must now obey the Saviour's gracious call; we must cordially accept his proffered mercy, and fighting the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life. You know that you must die. You lay out the dead body of your friend with devout decency, you invite others to share in the funeral solemnities, you slowly bear the corpse to the cemetery, and gently lay it down in the narrow house, you garnish the spot where it rests. What do you mean by all this? You testify your belief that this body shall live again. You look forward to the day of your decease; I charge you, before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming that you also look forward to the day of your resurrection. You make provision for the resting-place of the body; I charge you that you provide for the hour when that dead body shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth. Oh! that it may be unto the resurrection of life eternal.

APPENDIX.

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

INSTALLATION OF DR. POLHEMUS

AS PASTOR OF THE NORTH DUTCH CHURCH OF NEWARK,

May 3d, 1857,

BY

REV. D. H. RIDDLE, D.D.,

OF JERSEY CITY.

SERMON.

THE SECRET OF MINISTERIAL POWER.

"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."—Gal. 2 : 20.

We are instinctively disposed to investigate with special interest any thing new, extraordinary, or mysterious. A startling event, for example, a singular natural phenomenon; an extraordinary course of conduct, or a life of singular incidents and peculiar developments. On this principle, "the life which" the apostle Paul "lived in the flesh," after his conversion, is intensely interesting. We naturally ask, how and why was it? What is the philosophy of it? This passage gives us just what we desire to know. It gives us the secret of his life, and taking Paul as a representative man, the secret also of ministerial power in every age.

"The life which I *now* live in the flesh." There is special emphasis to be given to the term, "now." It carries us back to a former life. It was not always so. The life he once lived in the flesh was very different. It was such a life as multitudes are living every where around us: "walking in a vain show," "disquieted in vain;" "according to the course of this world," "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind;" their sensual or intellectual or æsthetic preferences governed by the current maxims, prevalent fashions, or ruling *mania* of the age. Yes, Paul once lived, as many of our bright and

gifted young men are doing, "unto himself." He "loved the praise of men;" coveted "the honor that cometh from man;" prided himself in his genius, acquisitions, family, and Phariseeism. If not covetous of gold, as probably he was above "that vile idolatry," yet he had been of that more elevated and alluring, but not less damning form of it—Fame, the ruin in every age of so many of the strongest of our race, "the last infirmity," as one terms it, "of great minds." But "*now*," "after it pleased God to reveal his Son in him," he was dead to all this; alike to the power of selfishness and the pleadings of ambition; the world's opinion, the maxims current around him, the fashions, follies, and fame of this world—yea, his own previously strongest prejudices and passions. For Christ and the Gospel's sake, he became "as the offscouring of all things." Henceforth, toil, shame, self-denial, and reproach were his portion and glory. From that period his after "life in the flesh" was brief, but bright and glorious. In about twenty-five years he travelled over almost the whole of the then known world—made a wider circuit of benevolence, as a herald of salvation, than Alexander's of unhallowed ambition. He passed through every species of suffering; was afflicted with every thing that could lacerate a generous nature; wore himself out in labors, generally thankless, and always unrequited: was stoned, scourged, shipwrecked, deserted, and at last laid himself down to die an ignominious death, like the dying gladiators, to give a Roman rabble a holiday!

This life is a phenomenon, a glorious fact, a marvel. He tells us how it was. It was "by the faith of the Son of God," he says, "who loved me and gave himself for me." Paul's life in the flesh gives us the secret of ministerial power and a model for ministerial imitation. It embraces four elements:

I. An abiding realization of the personal existence of Jesus Christ, "the Son of God."

II. Of his living and perpetual presence.

III. Of his indwelling and inworking power.

IV. Of his personal and infinite love.

Let us look at these as elements of ministerial power in every age.

I. "The faith of the Son of God" includes an abiding realization of *his personal existence.* The Lord Jesus Christ is not a mythical being, a mere character, drawn by the hand of genius, from materials furnished by imagination, history, and observation; not an aggregation of excellencies, without an original—a mere ideal. No! "The Son of God" is a living reality. He was the life of the universe, "visible and invisible," "before the mountains were brought forth," before angel, earth, or man existed. "Before Abraham," he says, "I am." In the past eternity He "dwelt in the bosom of the Father;" was "the Word of God, in the beginning," "from everlasting." "In the fullness of time" he "became flesh." By incarnation he embodied and represented the Infinite and Eternal; in actual and visible humanity, "the glorious brightness and express image of God's essence;" in the veritable Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, he suffered in the flesh for the sins of men; he died on the cross, was buried, rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God, where he "liveth again" and forever, in a true and proper personality, "the Son of God." Such, to the faith of Paul, was "the Son of God;" not the fancy or memory of excellencies which had never existed, or were embodied only for a season in an actual character, but all that he manifested himself to be on earth, of infinite power, wisdom, compassion, and holiness, still existing in a real person; one as actual as material nature; as capable of influencing and exercising the mind and heart, in its motives, hopes, fears, and joys, as the objects of sight, or intellect, or personal friendship. To him, indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ was the great reality of existence, the very key-stone of the universe, material and mental, the Person who gave it being and continuance. "The Son of God," to the Apostle, was "all in all," "head over all

things." He believed in Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," as he believed in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

This "faith of the Son of God" was the element, substance, and speciality of "the life he lived in the flesh." He gathered up and concentrated in this Person all he knew and believed and hoped concerning God.

Except on this philosophy of faith, living faith, in a living Saviour, the life Paul lived in the flesh and the power he exerted is utterly inexplicable. "The name of Jesus, through faith in that name," the fact first, and then the full realization of it in the heart, solves the mystery. The life of a Christian and the power of a minister, in every age, depends on this same faith. For, after all, "this is the victory over the world, even your faith. Who is he that overcometh the world?" Who has power in the closet, the pulpit, the parlor, "but he that believeth that Jesus is come in the flesh?" faith in "Immanuel," "God with us." Yes. The faith that gives reality to piety and power to a minister, is not the faith of the incomprehensible and infinite merely, the faith of theists—yea, of devils too—but the faith of the incarnate, "the faith of the Son of God." "We believe in God." Well, as far as it goes. So did the Jews; so do philosophers. "Believe also in me," says the great Teacher. This is Christianity as a life in the soul; "the faith of God's elect" in every age; "the faith of the Son of God." This is the power of the Christian minister; the steadfast realization, without faltering, of a living Lord Jesus Christ; "a lamb in the midst of the throne;" a brother man at the centre of power. If this is not so; if "the Son of God" is not risen, living, reigning; if there is no real Lord Jesus Christ, "then our preaching is vain and your faith is vain;" Paul's life was a farce—yea, all is but a dream.

II. "The faith of the Son of God" includes an abiding realization of *his living presence.* We do not mean a visible, nor,

in the common acceptation of the term, a material presence; not a presence cognizable by the senses, or possible to mere intellect; but still, a *real presence*—a presence as capable of affecting the heart, rousing its energies, and giving direction to its preferences and passions, as that of visible and tangible things; real as Niagara, the ocean, the everlasting hills, yea, more so. The seen are the unsubstantial; the unseen are the real. To Paul's mind and heart, there was substance, abidingness, infinite grounds of conviction in "things not seen," and the greatest of all these invisibilities was "the Son of God," "the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul's faith made substantial the promise given by Christ, as he was about to hide himself from bodily view and vision, in the glory of the all-embracing spiritual world. "Lo, I am with you always." This is a pledge of perpetual, personal, spiritual presence. Paul's faith brought this home to his soul's abiding convictions and deepest affections. He endured just as if he saw Him always, as he saw Him once, actually. "The Lord" was always "before him, at his right hand." He apprehended "the Son of God," not as afar off, but as "with him," yea, "in him." He said, "not in his heart, who shall go up into heaven, to bring Christ down, or who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead," as too many of us, Christians and ministers, do. But "the word of faith," which he preached to others, and the exercise of faith, which explains his life in the flesh, had reference to what was nigh. "The Son of God," to Paul, was like the sounds which vibrate to our soul's depths, uttered by the human voice, or the emotions of which we are conscious as they thrill through our hearts; "a living presence," not such as the poet and the Pantheist speak of, but of a personal being, "the Son of God," with all the power, knowledge, and sympathy manifested during his incarnation, and now "crowned with glory and power," "King of kings and Lord of lords." Paul felt the power of this living presence

of his Lord every where he went, and whatever he suffered: in the dungeon; on the deep; buffeted, stoned, shipwrecked; amidst perils from his enemies, and severer "perils from false brethren;" when tarrying at Jerusalem; when "caught up into Paradise;" when abiding a little season at his own loved native Tarsus, the home of his childhood, amidst the scenes and memories of his youth; or travelling through the ancient cities of Asia Minor, the barren sands of Scythia, the magnificent glories of ancient Tyre; standing on Mars Hill; preaching at Rome; pleading with Gentiles, or his "own brethren according to the flesh;" arraigned before Nero; lone and forsaken of all friends; all through life in sight of the scaffold; in the article and agony of an ignominious death; every where and at all times "the Son of God," the personal Redeemer, was to him a living presence, real as the mountains and the sea, the prison and the palace.

This explains, and this alone can explain satisfactorily, the phenomenon of "the life that Paul lived in the flesh," the personal presence of a personal Saviour and Lord. First, as a glorious objective reality, and then made substantial and evident to his soul by faith. The presence of Christ, through faith in that presence, explains the mystery. "At my answer," he says, "all men forsook me." This seems the acme of solitude. "Nevertheless the Lord stood with me." What cared he for desertion?

This is the secret of ministerial power: to know, and feel, and make real by faith, the living presence of the Lord Jesus; to hear him, who has "all power in heaven and earth," saying, "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will help thee, I will strengthen; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness:" to be able to say, without faltering and in faith, "Thou art with me," whoever else befriends or opposes, is faithful or false, stands by or forsakes.

III. The faith of the Son of God, includes, again, the assurance of the *indwelling and inworking power of the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is something incomprehensible to the merely intellectual man. It is a mystery too deep and high for "flesh and blood." But in the heart and life of Paul it was a blessed experimental reality, an indispensable element of his faith, without which he never could have lived the life he did in the flesh. "I am crucified along with Christ," he says. As if he said, by the irradiations thrown from the cross over all earthly things, all the prospects by which men are usually influenced, and by which my heart once was stirred, they have been nullified, have lost all their power. The ordinary motives to human action and ambition are all gone. I have now a heart no longer for such poor, worthless, insignificant objects as the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. Seen in the light of the cross, seen as it is, "the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Were this all, were it "all of life to live" here, there is nothing left strong enough to rouse or permanent enough to sustain me: but it is not all. "Nevertheless I live:" I find something, notwithstanding, to give life to my soul; to infuse energy into my conduct; to give me an object for my heart's noblest affections, and a work for the whole of my earthly pilgrimage and activities. Yes! We acknowledge this life is a mystery. So did Paul. "It is not I," he says, my former self; not the Paul who once courted fame, distinction, self-glorification; not the old Ego; "not I, but Christ liveth in me." His life is the source, the secret, the support of mine. He is my life; "the life I live now in the flesh;" "my strength to suffer and my will to serve; my high endeavor and my glad success:" all are from Him. I am "not sufficient, as of myself," for any thing, even the least. But "I can do all things," even the greatest, "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

This is Paul's explanation of the life he lived. He was, did, suffered, accomplished all, because Christ was in him, a glori-

ous element of spiritual life, and he was "in Christ Jesus" a new creature, a being of consciously new hopes, joys, fears, and prospects; surrounded by new interests, yea, a world of life and motive before unknown and unfelt; the "world within the veil;" "the power of the world to come." Dead to all former sources of life, joy, and activity, nevertheless he lived another, nobler, worthier life, "by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave himself for him." For him "to live was Christ." It was his joy to labor, his glory to suffer, and, if need be, to die for Christ. As the crown and consummation of this life, he did at last die for his dear Lord. Hear his death-song: "Now I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have finished my course. I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." Yes, "the faith of the Son of God," which explained his life, gave peace, and triumph, and glory to his death. He could say: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is power; "the power of God to usward who believe;" the power that wrought in Paul mightily. "Christ in us" is not only "the hope of glory" to the Christian personally, but the source and secret of all true ministerial power.

IV. "The faith of the Son of God" includes, lastly, an abiding realization of *his love in its personal application and wonderful manifestation*. "The Son of God, who loved me," me, as an individual and with a personal affection, "and who gave himself for me," proved this personal and unparalleled affection by dying in my stead and for my benefit the death of the cross. This is the grand element of the life of faith and of the power of the Apostle. "The love of Christ constrained him."

Paul, as we have already intimated, believed in the preëxistence of the eternal word: "before the mountains were brought forth," "from everlasting." He believed that "by Him all things were created, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and by Him all things consist," are kept in existence. By allying Himself to our humanity and taking our place in the transaction of the atonement, He lost nothing of this original, uncreated glory and excellence; He only held it in abeyance "a little while." Now, conceive of the personal affection of such a Being as this; so great and glorious; "Lord of angels," proprietor of the universe, "heir of all things," only-begotten and well-beloved of the Father, as Paul's expression indicates. To snatch him from deep-deserved, eternal destruction, his Lord and Saviour took his place, gave himself in his stead to shame, reproach, suffering, and ignominy; died that he might not die, but live and reign with him forever. This was a love which was immeasurable every way. "It passeth knowledge," unparalleled and unapproachable. And this love was manifested to one so consciously worthless and utterly incapable of any adequate return. The vivid realization and appropriation of this love, this personal affection and infinite kindness of the Son of God, towards him and in his behalf, made palpable and kept before him by the cross, made Paul what he was; explains "the life he lived in the flesh." He acted under the power of a sweet and generous compulsion. He could not, in a sense, do otherwise. He thus judged: if He died for me, should I not die also? Not only I should not, but can not live unto myself now—for my own pleasure, glory, or aggrandizement, but unto Him who loved me and gave himself for me. The ever-present sense of this love—an appreciation of it, deepening with increasing knowledge of Christ, and fuller comprehension of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth—entered as a living element into the faith of the Apostle. This sustained him, when else he would have sunk.

This roused him, when otherwise he would have fainted. When, for example, the unreasonableness, or wickedness, ignorance, pride, or self-sufficiency of men would have wearied his patience and worn out his zeal, the thought of this love of Christ—this unsolicited, undeserved, amazing, infinite love, reänimated his soul, and put new vigor into his otherwise exhausted energies. What if men, he would say, hate or despise me, He loved and loves me still. He who was so great, loved me, so worthless and insignificant; loved me with a costly affection; "loved me and gave himself for me." And shall I not live, labor, pray for, suffer for others? Should I not die, or wear out, if this would be the means of their salvation? When the flesh pleaded for repose or enjoyment; when taste urged its pleas for gratification; when "the pride of life" poured its strong tides of fascination around him; when "the love of many waxed cold," and there was nothing visible to inspire, or earthly to recompense him, then his eye of faith and affection turned again and rested on the cross; he grasped once more the demonstration of the untiring, invincible love of Christ, "stronger than death," that "many waters could not quench," triumphant over ingratitude and malice; and then the pulse of love in his soul towards others was quickened into new energy, and brought forth new and beautiful results in his life. This was the secret of all that wonderful life of untiring, unselfish beneficence. "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me." This love of Christ, shed abroad in the heart, pervading all its passions, constituting its life, accounts for every thing peculiar in the character and conduct of the Apostle. This, too, is the secret life of eminent Christians, ministers, missionaries, martyrs, in every age—the constraining love of Christ, brought home personally, as by Paul, "who loved me and gave himself for me." What ought not, what can not such love, fully realized, enable us to do or endure?

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

The love of Christ is the very blood of the life of faith.

Such is the philosophy of the life of Paul—"the life which he lived in the flesh" after his conversion. It was "by the faith of the Son of God;" his personal existence, living presence, inworking power, and infinite love. Such was the power of Christianity, exemplified in one of like passions with others, yea, who was once "a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious."

Is such a life impossible, unattainable now? Might we not, ought we not, to be ministers after the model of Paul? Is piety and ministerial power a thing of centuries or geography? or, like its great Author, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever?" Do not all the truths and facts on which Paul's life was based, and by which it is explained, hold equally good now, as eighteen centuries ago, when he was sustained, animated, and transformed by them? Is not the Lord Jesus Christ living yet? Does not he still promise his real personal presence to us, the successors of the Apostles—to each and all of us, "always, to the end of the world?" Is not his indwelling and inworking power exhaustless and immutable? Does not his infinite love appeal with undiminished tenderness and power to every principle of generosity and gratitude in our hearts? May not each of us say, as truly as Paul, "who loved me and gave himself for me"? Oh! if our faith only took hold, as his did, of a living personal object; if we vividly felt, as Paul, the living presence of an invisible Saviour, and apprehended and experienced his indwelling and inworking energy and the power of that infinite love which constrained him, what might we not be and do? With such a faith, there is nothing in the way of toil, or self-denial, we could not endure; no temptations or allurements we could not resist; no lovely forms of piety we could not exemplify; no

joys of salvation we might not experience; no peace in life we could not illustrate; and no glory and triumph in death we might not exhibit as really as the Apostle Paul. This would be as much for our own comfort as for the confirmation of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God. Yes. The faith of Christ would do all; "to him that believeth all things are possible." Faith has a kind of omnipotence. There is no history like that of its heroes. It has "wrought righteousness, subdued kingdoms, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire." If Christ is the same, if truth the same, if love the same, why should not the life be the same also? This "faith in the Son of God" is what we ministers want more than any thing else. This is what the times demand; what the crisis requires, more than eloquence, taste, science, any thing else, to make us able ministers. We must see more clearly the personal existence of the Son of God; grasp the living reality of his presence; feel his inward life, and be entranced with his unutterable love, and thus be changed into his image. This would make us preach so that men would hear, and believe, and be saved. Could we always behold "the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," as we see the sun and the stars; could we ever feel his presence beaming upon us, as John did on Patmos; grasp his hand and feel the throbbings of his heart of love, we would be dead to all other glory or ambition. Then we could speak, as Paul did, of realities, known, felt, and glorious. Then we would never come down from the elevations of the pulpit, (the loftiest position mortals are ever called to occupy,) in order to pander to the morbid appetites, tickle the itching ears, or cater to the perverted taste of our fellow men. We should not preach ethics, or metaphysics, or politics, but Christ first, Christ last, Christ always; Christ in his person; Christ in his offices; Christ as the way, the truth, and the life—as the only hope of sinners, the only Lord God; the present Governor and final Judge; "King of kings and Lord of lords." He would fill

our vision, be the substance of our message and the echo of all our utterances. Full of this glory ourselves, and reflecting it all around, we would thus change men "into the same image from glory to glory"—write on men's hearts "living epistles, seen and read of all men." Then we would patiently toil on, painting portraits, resemblances of infinite grace and loveliness, which will grow more beautiful and mellow in the atmosphere of heaven, and through the cycles of eternity forever and ever!

Such ministers may God's grace make us all, and such, brethren, may he prove whom you have chosen, and who is now to be installed as your pastor. Amen.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 147 382 0